FUTURE CIENCE FICTION

NO. 30

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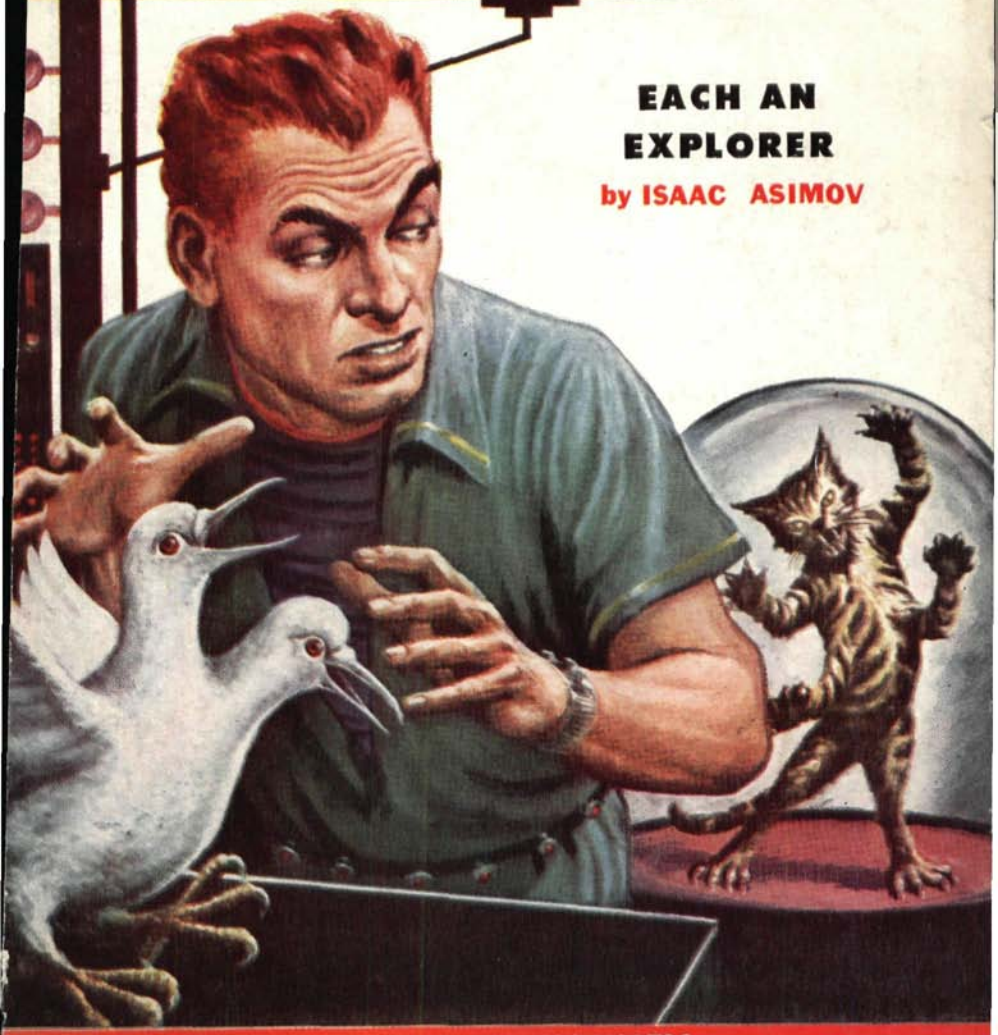

EACH AN EXPLORER

by ISAAC ASIMOV

FREDERIK POHL ERIC FRANK RUSSELL

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP RANDALL GARRETT

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Author! Author!

ISAAC ASIMOV's father owned a newsstand, so Ike has been a fan as long as he's been able to read. Like others before and after him (John W. Campbell, Jr., and Robert Silverberg, respectively, for example), he wrote his way through college. Now Dr. Asimov, biochemist, and an instructor at Cambridge, Ike is one of the brightest and steadiest lights in the science fiction firmament. He's more than fulfilled the promises suggested in his first published story, "Marooned Off Vesta," which appeared 1939.

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP, is the author of the best book on the writing of science fiction that has been published to date, "Science Fiction Handbook." His best known science fiction novels are "Lest Darkness Fall," and "Rogue Queen," while fantasy fans know him for his many collaborations with the late Fletcher Pratt, such as "Tales from Gavagan's Bar." His articles are witty, accurate, and painful to cultists. He first appeared in 1937, with a short story, "The Isolinguals."

FREDERIK POHL, anthologist and author, ex-editor and author's agent, came up from the ranks of New York fandom. His first story appeared at the end of 1940, under the name of James MacCreigh, and his writing aliases have been as numerous as his early collaborations tangled. It was not until 1952 that his name first appeared in a by-line—on "Gravy Planet" ("The Space Merchants")—with Cyril Kornbluth; and two years more were to elapse before his first solo appearance as Frederik Pohl. Since then, Fred's apparently decided that his real name reads quite well, and the better editors like to see it on their contents pages.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL is a British author, whose name came up to science fiction scrutiny early in 1937. Two of his magazine novels have seen hard-cover editions—"The Star Watchers" ("Sentinels of Space"), and the 1955 award-winning "Call Him Dead" ("Three to Conquer"). Fantasy fans still talk about his novel which launched *Unknown* magazine in 1939. "Sinister Barrier," based on the works of the late Charles Fort. Russell's stories have a bent toward sociological irony, which can often be funnier and more telling than the bitterest satire.

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NOVELET

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FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION, Number 30, published by Columbia Publications, Inc., 241 Church Street, New York 13, N. Y. Copyright 1956 by Columbia Publications, Inc.

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I loaded my musket anxiously.

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Utopia-seeking seems to be pretty much a part of what we call "human nature", and some of the funniest tragi-comedies in history are the factual accounts of what happened in utopian colonies. One or two have actually been successful, but the vast majority have merely proved that (a) no single aspect of government and/or economics is the root of all human ills (b) you can't legislate goodness.

It's reasonable to assume, however, that humans will try to build utopias, nonetheless, whenever the opportunity arises. There haven't been opportunities since the 19th Century, but the era of space-travel may open quite a number of them. The planet Turania, for example.

L. Sprague de Camp, well-known for political and social satire in science fiction, manages to come up with a fresh slant in this entirely believable account of Activists and Passivists, effectively removed from the "coorrupting influence of "decadent" civilization.

NEW ARCADIA

NOVELET

by L. Sprague de Camp

Illustrated by FREAS

As the hoist descended, two groups, each of twenty or thirty people, ran towards us. The smaller group was all men wearing kilts, while the other, the nude crowd, included both sexes. Most of the men in both sets carried shillalahs and glowered at each other. When they drew closer, so that the two crowds got mixed up, they began pushing, waving their clubs, and shouting abuse. They spoke French, because the original colony on Turania was mostly French Swiss.

The two leaders pushed forward and began yelling at Captain Kubala. One — a tall old fellow with a lot of white hair and beard, and a headdress decorated with the glassy wings of some of the local fauna — I took to be Henri Vaud, the original leader of the colony. The other was a dark, sharp-nosed little man with big staring black eyes.

Kubala bellowed: *"Holà! Silence!"* When the noise had quieted a little, he pointed at the old man. "You, monsieur."

Vaud said: "Monsieur, you will naturally address yourself to me, as the duly elected president of Nouvelle-Arcadie, when this cow-head has ceased to push his raucous cries."

The leader of the nudies said: "Monsieur the captain, if you will silence this aged species of camel, I have a matter of the

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most urgent importance to submit to you."

"Who are you?" said Kubala.

"Me, I am Louis Motta, president of the republic of Liberté."

"He is a demagogue who has seduced some of my poor ones to rebellion," said Vaud. "I am still president of all the human souls on Turania —"

"I treat your claims with scorn!" cried Motta. "Liberté is a free and independent sovereign nation. We don't recognize the authority of this tyrant. But what is more urgent is that we are attacked by Cimbrians —"

"Naturally," said Vaud. "This *salaud* divides us in the face of peril, forsakes the safety of our island, invades the lands of the Cimbrians and provokes —"

"It's a gratuitous aggression of the Cimbrians!" yelled Motta.

"WAIT! SILENCE!" shouted Captain Kubala. "First, what do you mean by Cimbrians on Turania? Cimbria is ten light-years away."

"Oh, they are here," said Motta. "How or why I know not."

"And second," said Kubala, "Cimbrians are one of the most peaceful and orderly peoples in the Galaxy; they've never bothered anybody."

"You see?" said Vaud. "It's evident that he must have attacked them first."

"It's a lie!" screamed Motta. "They have killed two of our people and wounded five more. They have guns, which we do not. They glide themselves up and shoot us while we are quietly going about our business."

The two presidents continued shouting until Kubala quieted them with his roar. "Let's do things in order," he said. "First, I am Czeslaw Kubala, captain of the *Daedalus,* whose tender you see here. This is Arthur Ramaswami, my first officer, and this" (indicating me) "is Gerald Fay of the World News Service. He will visit you until the last departure of the tender."

"He will visit which of us?" said President Motta.

"Ask him," said Kubala.

I said: "Messieurs, I'm supposed to find out what's happened in the fifteen years since Nouvelle-Arcadie was founded. I want to visit everybody that time allows."

"Come when you like, my dear sir," said President Vaud, "and stay as long as you like. I am naturally ardent that you shall get the correct story."

"You must visit us first, though," said Motta. "It is only logical. Liberté is a short walk from here on the continent, so you need not wait for a favorable wind to go to Nouvelle-Arcadie."

"Well . . ." I said, but then one of the women in the Motta

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crowd spoke. "I pray you, monsieur, visit us first," she said. "We shall be desolated otherwise."

ANYBODY WHO has been thrown in with nudists knows that the effect wears off in ten minutes. After that, you don't even have to keep yourself from staring. This girl, though, I found attractive. She wasn't beautiful; of medium height, rather more sturdy and muscular than we'd consider modish. She was dark, with her hair in a bun and her teeth a little irregular. No beauty, but she shone health, vigor, and personality. She wore sandals and carried a big bag slung over her shoulder by a strap of the bark of the leather-tree, *Scorteliber lentus*.

Well, it's really a man of no strength of character I am. Any circumstance can push me into anything. I said I'd first visit Liberté, and gave my name again.

"Enchanted," she said. "Me, I am Adrienne Herz."

Kubala was asking President Vaud: "What in particular do you want?"

"I want assistance in suppressing revolt," said Vaud. "I may exhort you for protection against criminal bands of my own species, isn't it?"

"Criminal bands!" yelled Motta.

Kubala stopped him and said: "I think not, Monsieur Vaud. Your original charter gave Nouvelle-Arcadie complete internal autonomy. These secessionists are all members of your original colony or their children, is it not?"

"But, yes," said Vaud.

"Well, if you want to coerce them back into the fold, you must find some way to do it yourself."

"But we cannot! It would be against our pacifistic principles!" said Vaud.

Kubala said: "But then how could I —"

"But you are not one of us. You are not held by such principles!"

CAPTAIN KUBALA growled: "If that's your Latin logic ... All I'll do is to take back to Earth anybody who doesn't like it here. Now, Monsieur Motta, what do you want? War with these mysterious Cimbrians?"

"Oh, no!" said President Motta. "We Passivists are the only sincere pacifists. I wouldn't have you do the Cimbrians ill. What I really want is for you to fly to Cimbria and lodge a complaint with the government there."

"That's absolutely impossible," said Kubala. "Cimbria is almost as far from here as Earth, and I have a scheduled

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run. What did you say about pacifists being pacifists?"

"Passi*vists*, not paci*fists*," said Motta. "Vaud's faction call themselves Activists, while we are the Passivists. Vaud has betrayed his original principles."

"How?"

"He has become organization-minded. All we have heard is order, discipline, regulations, and harder work to raise the standard of living. But as soon as one does that, one is on the road to autocracy, war, crime, imperialism, and all the other vices of civilization. So we have gone back to first principles."

President Vaud said: "He lies! He is only a clever demagogue, hiding his ambition behind a mask of idealistic primitivism . . ."

The shouting started again until Kubala quieted it and said: "Wouldn't you like your mail?"

"But naturally!" cried the Arcadians. During the talk, the hoist had been running up and down the side of the tender, slung from a boom like a big bucket. On each trip it brought stuff that Vaud had ordered years ago: cloth, matches, razor-blades, sheet-rubber, paper, photographic supplies, medicines, and so forth.

THE CREWMEN set up a table, and Ramaswami dumped the mail-bags out on this. As the mail had all been microfilmed, three bags held it all, though the reading-matter represented here was enormous.

Ramaswami asked: "What shall we do with these rolls? Each has letters or pages of printed matter addressed to different people. We thought you'd be one colony, so everybody could read his letters and publications on the viewers as his name came up. But if you're divided into two . . ."

After some hemming and hawing, the girl who wanted me to visit Liberté, Adrienne Herz, said: "I suppose each faction will have to take half the rolls at hazard and make enlargements of the pages addressed to people in the other community. Then the Activist mail-man and I will make a rendezvous and exchange them."

"You're the mail-girl for the Passivists?" said Kubala.

"That's correct."

Vaud said: "August Zimmerli is acting as mail-man for us." He indicated a fat man, and soon Ramaswami was dealing out rolls of microfilm, one to one, and one to the other.

II

THE PART of Turania where we were is covered with dark forest. The Turanian trees are mostly broad-leaved evergreens, somber-looking save where they burst into flowers.

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These are sometimes the size of plates. That's because the flying arthropods grow so large, since there are no flying vertebrates to compete with them. The trees had been cleared from the field in response to the *Daedalus'* radio-warning of its approach. As we left the field, the leaves closed in over us. A couple of insects the size of pigeons whizzed past us. (It's easier to call them insects than "insect-like Turanian exoskeletal arthropods.")

Adrienne Herz said: "Well, Monsieur Fay, my friends will be wild with jealousy when they see me bringing in the first Earthman we've seen in many years."

I got red and stammery. She was carrying her mail-bag; I couldn't carry it for her, because I was completely loaded down with my own gear. I said: "Mademoiselle, I'm only sorry I couldn't have been a better specimen of the breed. I hope I shan't embarrass you."

"Pouf! Monsieur quests for compliments." (I wasn't, but I didn't argue.) "What kind of *Terrien* are you?"

"Just a typical Earthman. My father is Irish, my mother is Russian; I was born in Japan and raised in the United States; I'm a British subject, and when I'm home I live in France. That's why they picked me for this job; that, and influence."

"You mean to say because you speak French so fluently?"

"Yes. Anyway, now that you're having a feud in Nouvelle-Arcadie, even an incompetent imitation of a correspondent like me can write it up. If everything had been as dull and peaceful as they warned me it would be, I'd have flubbed the assignment. I may yet."

"HOLD! VAUD has told us that Terrans are so aggressive and vain that they're always talking themselves into positions where they have to fight their way out. You seem different."

"Just one of nature's mistakes," I said. "Is this crowd the whole population of Liberté?"

"But no, there are many more. Motta has let only a fraction of us come to the field for the alighting. He feared that an accident might blow up the whole population of the village at once."

"What about this feud?"

"It has commenced about thirty years ago," she said, "when I was a girl of sixty-five." (I was startled until I remembered it takes four and a half Turanian years to make one of ours.) "Henri Vaud put himself to complaining about the colony. You know, at the start everything was most liberal; a sort of coöperative anarchy. But

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Vaud said that the lazies were putting too much of their portion of the work on the diligents; the men fought shamefully over the women; people formed secret societies against the interests of the majority, and so forth."

"Maybe they got bored with all that perfection."

"Perhaps. Anyway, Vaud talked of tighter organization, more discipline, and a more definite goal in life than heating ourselves to the sun on the beach. It sounded inspiring."

"And then?"

"First, there were stricter rules of conduct. Instead of the girls' making love as they pleased, and marrying the first boy by whom they got pregnant, he has established a rigorous system of supervised courtship. Then there were regular hours of work instead of weekly totals.

"This new system has given us more production. We have eaten better and we've had more and better houses. The sick have received more attention and the infants more schooling. With more time given to the forge, we've made more and better tools."

"It sounds fine so far," I said.

"But some people will always break laws, no matter how liberal. To stop them, Vaud made more and more rules. Nobody might leave Elysée without signing in and out. Everybody must address him formally as *vous*, while continuing to *tutoyer* each other . . ."

We came to the stockade, which stretched to right and left into the forest. I could hear the sound of surf through the trees. The gate opened and a swarm of children boiled out, shrieking. There must have been scores; we were soon wading knee-deep in naked children of all sizes. Adrienne said: "The littles wanted to be excused from school to see the tender alight, but Motta has decided that the field would be too dangerous."

We went through the gate. Inside, the land had been cleared and cut up with Swiss neatness into tilled patches of wheat, melons, carrots, and so on. Some of the plants were native, but most were terran. Inside the main stockade was a smaller one around the village proper.

When I got settled, I spent a half hour writing my impressions in shorthand. I may be a lousy correspondent, but I know how to go through the motions.

Then I left the guest-house to look at Liberté. I wandered around the fields, took a few pictures, and followed the stockade down to the beach, where it ended in shallow water. A quarter-mile down the beach, the other end of it ended likewise. Despite the wind, the surf

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wasn't heavy. The beach was in the lee of Nouvelle-Arcadie, which rose from Taylor Sea a couple of miles west. I saw some little floating dots which I took to be Vaud's Activists paddling back to their island.

THE BEACHES on Turania are mostly narrow because, for practical purposes, there are no tides. The only moon looks much smaller than ours, only two or three times as big as Jupiter looks from Earth. There were a dozen or so outrigger dugout canoes and catamarans drawn up on the sand. Some Passivists were swimming. One shouted to me to join them. I was tempted to do so, as the air was hot and damp and I was sticky. But I got embarrassed and shook my head. If I stripped I should feel self-conscious; and if I went back for my trunks I should probably feel even more so. These children of nature would wonder if it was a truss.

At the upper edge of the beach, a little skinny man had some sort of apparatus set up on a tripod. I recognized a barometer and other meteorological instruments.

"Allô!" he said. "Me, I am Maximilian Wyss, and you are the Terran writer, is it not?"

After civilities, I asked him about the apparatus. He said: "I record the weather to see if we need some rain-making. There are lots of rain-squalls here, but they are mostly small. So, a small area like ours may be missed for many consecutive days. Or it may get them every day for half a year and be inundated."

"What's the forecast?" I asked.

"Rain tonight. Look to the west and you will see."

GROOMBRIDGE 1618 was beginning to set behind Nouvelle-Arcadie. A visitor on Turania always gapes at sunsets. Since this star has about three times the visual diameter of Sol, and moves through the sky only about half as fast, it takes nearly six times as long to set in a given latitude. Moreover, the planet is cloudier than Earth; so you see the huge red ball, if at all, through layers of clouds.

During the long sunset, the clouds got thicker until I could see only patches of the sun, though overhead the clouds were banded with yellows and reds and purples. Then the clouds closed in. They boiled and thickened, with lightning and thunder. The swimmers came in, and Maximilian Wyss packed up the portable parts of his apparatus. "Here she comes."

I started back for Liberté; and was going through the inner stockade, when it started. In two seconds I could hardly see to

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walk. I knocked on the first house and was told to come in. This I did, dripping.

"Allô!" said a plump middle-aged fellow. "Come in, my old. You are the correspondent from Earth, no? I am Carl Adorn." He introduced his wife and five children. "Seat yourself. What think you of our vile utopia, *hé?"*

We had to shout over the roar of the storm. I said: "Is that storm usual?"

"But yes; this is only a little one."

I started pumping Adorn about the story of the colony, but then somebody banged a gong. "Supper," he said. "Come, everybody."

The seven Adorns marched out into the downpour. When they got to the dining-hall, they wiped themselves as they went in on a couple of foul-looking bath-towels; but that did my soaked clothes no good. There were about a hundred Passivists, all talking like mad. I never saw so many pregnant women at once. I started to sit with the Adorns, but President Louis Motta made me sit with him and the officers of the *Daedalus.*

MOTTA FILLED us full of their native wine and asked Captain Kubala about the planets he'd seen. Kubala told about Cimbria (that is, Procyon A IV) and Scythia and Parthia. (I used to think the astronomers named the planets of other systems after Cunard liners, but I found out they simply used the same system as the Cunard-White Star people, which was to apply obsolete Terran geographical names.) The food was plentiful and good, albeit vegetarian. It was all I could do to stick to my diet; I should become a fat man in no time if I let myself go on the calories. The Arcadians eat enormous amounts of the native Turanian melons. Himself found time to remark, between thunderclaps, that he'd like to see me after the meal.

In his office, Motta came to the point: "I notice you have visited the Adorns."

"Yes," I said.

"And that earlier you conversed with Adrienne Herz?"

"Yes."

"Very well, my brave. I don't wish to hinder your social life, or censor your movements, but as a practical matter you had better get your information on the colony from me."

"Why?"

"Because I am the only one who knows the complete story and can give you an impartial account. Certainly a notorious malcontent like Adorn is not a proper source. How long will you be on Turania?"

"Kubala says the tender will take off for the last time about thirty of your days hence. He

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has to pick up food and water —"

"YES, YES, I know. I try to construct you a program that will occupy your time to best advantage. In that time you will not be able to visit Elysée."

"*Hein?*" I said. "But that's plenty of time, and I *must* go to Nouvelle-Arcadie! My employers would consider that I'd failed in my mission otherwise."

"Oh, you don't really want to go there. It's a miserable canoe-trip. You will get drenched and seasick; and if the wind is contrary, you may be unable either to go or to return when you wish. Furthermore, there is nothing on Nouvelle-Arcadie that you can't see here. The wild life on the island cannot compare with ours for size and variety."

"But I've got to! I must interview Vaud and his people."

"On the contrary, you'd get nothing from them but lies. Vaud would give you a highly biased story of our break, justifying all his crimes and tyranny, while his people are too spineless and terrorized to tell you the truth."

"That may be, but I've got to try."

"No you don't; your employers will never know the difference."

I said: "I'm in the habit of writing the truth as I see it."

"Be reasonable."

"I am reasonable. I have my duty —"

"You are just an obstinate young fool! It's a dangerous voyage."

"I'll take a chance."

"Not with my boats," he said. "When you come here, you put yourself under my jurisdiction. If I consider some act harmful to my people, I cannot let you do it."

I LOST MY temper. I know; a good correspondent wouldn't, but I never claimed to be a good anything. At that, I should probably have been too cowardly to speak out to the man if he hadn't been half my size. I stood up and shouted: "You think you'll make me a prisoner here, just because I might hear something to your disadvantage, *hé?* Well, let me tell you, monsieur —"

"Think you I will let you go to Elysée to tell Vaud all about us, so he can attack?" he shouted back.

"I'm a British subject and I'll go where I please."

"This isn't Britain and you shall do as I command."

"Command away, and we shall see," I said.

"None of my men shall take you to the island."

"Then I'll paddle there myself."

"You may not touch my boats. Build yourself a raft, or

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walk on the water." I was surprised to see tears in the President's eyes. "Everybody's against us: the Activists, and the Cimbrians, and now you. They hate us for our superior idealism. Go away, monster!"

I went, shaking, back to the guest-house. Arthur Ramaswami was spending the night there and had a bottle of Turanian wine. We spent the evening drinking it and telling each other our troubles.

III

NEXT MORNING I set out to interview the other Passivists. I also thought of promoting a secret trip to Nouvelle-Arcadie, perhaps by stealing one of the canoes. I don't know if I'd ever have been able to work up the courage. I admire the rough-hewn swashbuckling heroes of romance, who ruthlessly go after what they want, in spite of God or man; some people, deceived by my 250 pounds and rhinoceros-like build, mistake me for that kind of person. They don't know what a poor little mouse of an ego is cowering inside all that beef. I'm absurdly timid about laws and rules, perhaps because of my British associations.

When I tackled the first Passivist, he said: *"Bon jour, Monsieur Fay,"* but when I tried to prolong the conversation he looked frightened and mumbled: *"Je ne sais pas!"*

When I tried others, the same thing happened. They didn't know anything, or they had to hurry off to work . . .

I found Adrienne and said: "Good morning, Mademoiselle Herz."

"Good morning, Monsieur Fay!" she said. "You slept well, I hope?"

"Are you speaking to me? Everybody else is giving me the silent treatment."

"Yes, President Motta has launched an order."

"I thought so. Holy-blue, that's a plain violation of the basic human rights, as guaranteed by the International Convention of —"

"But this isn't Earth," she reminded me. "Had you a terrible quarrel?"

"Bad enough. But couldn't we — ah — have a private talk somewhere?"

"Hm. I go for a swim after breakfast. I might swim north beyond the stockade, and if a little later you happened along in the same direction, nobody would remark the coincidence."

I SWAM north parallel to the beach in leisurely fashion. Beyond the north end of the stockade was a swamp or estuary, where a little stream emptied into the sea. Here a

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couple of Passivists were cutting a kind of reed or withe that grew there, and from which Liberté made its furniture. I kept on until I heard Adrienne calling: "Monsieur Fay! Here!"

I walked ashore in Turanian costume and found her behind the first line of shrubbery. She put her head out and looked back towards the stockade.

"Good," she said. "Nobody sees. Where would you like to go?"

I said: "If there's a trail up to some high point, so I could see the country . . ."

"I know just such an animal-trail."

We pushed through the brush, which scratched me cruelly but didn't seem to bother her, until she found the trail. It was wider than one would expect. She led me uphill away from the sea. I was soft from the space-trip, despite my earnest exercises, and found the climb strenuous. She trotted ahead like a deer. It was quiet except for the never-ending sough of the wind and the thrum of huge insects.

"Slow down!" I said. "Now, where were we? You were telling me how Vaud made all sorts of regulations, as that nobody should thee-and-thou him."

"Ah, yes. Next he tried to reintroduce clothes. The nudism had been one of his original principles, partly to avoid affectations and class distinction, partly because the temperature is always in the thirties" (she meant on the Centigrade scale) "except a few hours before dawn. So clothes are not necessary. But Vaud has decided that they would make us more decorous."

"Did they?"

"HE HAS NEVER succeeded, though he's persuaded his own faction to wear them on formal occasions like today. I think he designed that Scotch petticoat to hide his own pot-belly, as he's not so pretty as when I was little. However, when all these changes had put the people in a state of violent agitation, Motta made a revolt. He had formed a secret club, the Passivists, dedicated to a return to first principles of simplicity, libertarianism, and voluntary coöperation. There was a great battle, with the men giving blows of fist and pulling the hair, and the women pushing cries of encouragement.

"Motta, having only a third of the people, could not vanquish the rest. So when the fighters had quit for lack of breath, he agreed to leave the island with his faction, if given his share of supplies: boats, tools, medicine, and such. Vaud was in accord, as he could retain many indivisible things like the houses and the tractor. So we parted peacefully.

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"The Passivists paddled over to the mainland and set up a new village. My faith, but we have worked for a while! We hardly had the village built, and the fields disposed, when we learned some things we ought to have thought of sooner."

"For example?"

"For one thing, there are no large beasts on Nouvelle-Arcadie. Therefore guns aren't needed, and Vaud hadn't brought any. He thought if there were guns, and quarrels raised themselves, somebody might shoot. But here we have these big maladroit lizards —"

"So I see," said I, pointing. The trail had dipped and become soft and mucky. In the muck was a footprint like that of an elephant with big claws.

"Ah, an oecusaurus," said Adrienne.

"Are they dangerous?" I asked, my voice getting squeaky.

"NOT ESPECIALLY, unless they step on you by accident. But some of the smaller, carnivorous species are formidable. We lost a man and a little girl before we finished the outer palisade. And then came the Cimbrians."

"What about those?" I asked.

"You have heard Motta. There's some species of camp of Cimbrians beyond this range. They lead a wild life of the chase, shooting native reptiles with flint-guns and riding Terran horses down here to raid us."

"What?" said I. She repeated.

I said: "It doesn't make sense. Cimbrians *could* make modern arms if they wished; but they're the most peaceful and orderly civilized species known. I can't imagine Cimbrians riding horses and shooting muskets. Could they be another similar species mistaken for Cimbrians?"

"No. Motta knew some Cimbrians on Earth and assures us that these are authentic."

"Are they the remains of a lost colony, or the like?"

She shrugged. "I know not; nor do I know how they have acquired earthly horses."

I shook my head. "It's as if we found Earthmen on Cimbria, or Riphaea, riding Turanian lizards and hunting heads. Maybe if you could capture one you could find out."

"Perhaps; but we're impotent before their guns, and we cannot run after their horses."

The trail had steepened, so for a time I had no breath to talk. When I saw a convenient tree-trunk I said: "D'you mind if we stop to rest? I'm out of practice at imitating the goat of the mountains."

"A few years here would render you hard. It's —"

"*Yeowp!*" I yelled, leaping up. As I sat down, something

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stung me on the bare rump. It was a fearsome sting, too, like a red-hot needle.

"Poor man!" said Adrienne. "You sat on a vespoid. See?"

I LOOKED. The insect I had crushed, now giving its last kicks, did look like a large Terran wasp. Adrienne said: "There were lots of these here when we built the village, and they pricked us cruelly until we burned their nests."

"I see disadvantages to this Adam-and-Eve performance," I said, rubbing the afflicted spot.

"I'll put some mud on it the first swamp we see. It's too bad you killed it."

"Why? That's a form of wildlife for which I have little sympathy."

"Because otherwise it would have flown in a straight line for its nest, and we could have found the nest and destroyed it. Old Maximilian Wyss, our chief scientist, says these nests are just like those of the paper-wasps on Earth. Convergent evolution, he calls it."

I sat down again, looking carefully this time and sitting a little sideways. "Have you tried to make your own weapons against the Cimbrians?"

"Motta won't permit that; he puts his faith in interplanetary committees. In confidence, some young men have experimented with bows, but — Lord! — archery is more complicated than it seems. None has yet got anything one can hit an oecusaurus with. So . . ." She shrugged and spread her hands.

I got up and said: "All right, let's be going." I could have sat much longer admiring Adrienne. But if we didn't start, she might suspect me of not having my mind on the history of Nouvelle-Arcadie. "How far to the top?"

"Half a kilometer, I think."

I SAID: "You don't seem completely entrapped by Louis Motta's régime."

"I'm not, but what can I do? I have come with the Passivists for a reason other than doctrinaire arguments."

"What was that?"

"Under the new rules of Vaud, my parents tried to make me marry André Morax. Now André is not a wicked man, but he is the biggest bore in Nouvelle-Arcadie. Anyway, I don't love him; so I have come away."

"Good for you!"

She smiled at me, which made me flush and stumble over my own big feet. "Oh, Motta talks about the sacred rights of individualism," she said, "but he is at bottom as much a dictator as Vaud; and his followers are as sheep-like. Me, I am a true individualist. I believe in none of their fine talk but make up my own mind."

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"Live the individualism!"

"How do they arrange marriages on Earth nowadays?"

I shrugged. "Oh, about the same as when your colony left. Most of the world follows the American system, where each boy invites a series of girls out to the cinema and other entertainment — 'dates,' they call them — until a couple decides to make it permament. Some countries still have chaperons, or the parents make the arrangements."

"Are you married, monsieur?"

"No."

"Why not? You're old enough, aren't you?" These people were charmingly friendly but they came right to the point. My skin began to burn.

"I'm old enough," I gruffed. "About half again as old as you."

"Then why?"

"Oh, no woman would ever look at a big ugly hulk like me."

"I SEE NOTHING wrong with you," she said, running her eyes up and down me as if I were a prize hog. "A little thick in the middle, perhaps, but some hard work would repair that. Did you go on these 'dates?' "

"W-well, a few." My tongue was tied in knots; my feet seemed to have been put on backwards; and I could feel myself blushing all over. I don't know why I went ahead and opened up to Adrienne, except there's something about that nature-boy atmosphere that makes one drop all pretense. "To t-t-tell the truth, mademoiselle, I'm such a shy, timid fellow that the mere thought of a girl's rebuffing me fills me with horror."

"Oh, you big nicodemus! If you asked me on a 'date' I'd say, to a sure blow: when do we commence? That is to say, if I didn't suspect you of immoral intentions. Our chiefs say that all Earthmen are lascivious degenerates where the sexes are concerned. Are you a lascivious degenerate?"

"Well — uh — I — uh —" What could I say? "I d-don't think that would be a fair description. I —"

"Hush!"

"What is it?"

"Something on the trail," she said. "Into the bushes!"

She found us a place whence we could still see through the greenery to the trail. I heard something big moving, its feet thudding and the branches brushing its sides. There was movement among the leaves, and an oecusaurus appeared. I couldn't see all of it at once because of the leaves, but it was no less impressive for that. The name means it's a lizard as big as a house. It was as tall as an elephant and half again as long. There were four legs like tree-

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trunks; a thick neck, long enough to reach the ground; a big squarish head ending in a parrot-beak; a thick reptilian tail that swung from side to side as it walked; and a warty skin with knobs and spines, especially on its back and head.

WHEN THE oecusaurus had gone, and the rustling of its passage had died away, we crept back to the trail. Adrienne said: "We must watch for that one on our way back."

"Is he going down to the sea for a drink?"

"Yes." I knew Taylor Sea was only slightly brackish, so I wasn't surprised that the local fauna drank from it.

Even though I knew the oecusaurus was a plant-eater, and easily dodged, its passage took some of the carefree jollity out of our expedition. I found myself speaking in lowered tones and stopping to listen. When I got my mind off the fauna and back on Nouvelle-Arcadie, I asked: "How many are there in Liberté now?"

"A hundred and eighty — nearly two hundred. I can find you the exact number. There are so many births that it changes from week to week."

"How about Elysée?"

"About twice our population."

"Has the whole human community grown?"

"But yes, it has more than doubled. Monsieur Wyss says we are increasing faster than any Terran group. It's a healthy climate; the local diseases don't affect us; and we were all chosen for perfect health at the start. Besides, Vaud has insisted that we take full advantage of modern medicine."

"That, and the fact that there's nothing much else to do on these long nights," I added.

"NONE OF YOUR decadent Terran cynicism, you big fat *pataud,*" she said, "though it would be nice to go where the young men sometimes think of something else. I'm tired of beating them off."

"How do you manage that?"

"In the case that you, monsieur, should get any such ideas, I broke two ribs on the side of Maurice Rahn last year. And —"

Bang! There was a loud explosion and a big puff of gray smoke. Something hit a tree a foot from me and showered me with bits of bark.

I yelped and jumped away from the tree. I tripped over a big root of this tree that wound across the trail like a half-buried snake and fell into muck and shrubbery. I'm an awkward sort of ass in anything that takes agility.

Three Cimbrians popped out on to the trail, each carrying a short-barreled gun. Sure enough, they were muzzle-loading flint-

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locks. Cimbrians are taller than men — about six and a half feet — but much slenderer, so they weigh less on the average. They have silvery-gray fur all over, catlike faces, and long bushy tails with black rings like a raccoon.

They came so quickly that Adrienne had no time to move. One reached for her with its free hand. She jerked back and turned to run. Another Cimbrian tripped her and the third dropped his musket to jump on her back.

During these seconds, I was struggling up. I charged into the group, roaring "Unhand that maiden!" or something as silly. Out of the side of my eye I saw one of the Cimbrians swing his gun by the barrel. I was trying to change direction when the gun-butt hit me over the head. This time I went down cold.

OF COURSE you never know, when you wake up, how long you've been unconscious. I guess it was several minutes. When I came to, I could see, up the trail, two Cimbrians, with their guns slung across their backs, tying Adrienne to the back of a horse. The third stood by, holding the bridles of two other horses with one hand, and swinging his musket this way and that with the other. The horses wore funny-looking saddles, with big bags tied to them. While I was still blinking, one Cimbrian twittered something. They mounted the two unoccupied horses, one on one and two on the other, and off they rode as fast as the mounts could take the grade.

I stumbled to my feet and ran after them, but never got in sight of them again. I ran until I had to stop; then some more, and so on. When I came out on the height to which Adrienne had been leading me, I could only sink down with my back to a tree and sit panting while the sweat ran down me and flying things buzzed round me.

When I could stand again I looked at the scene. To the west was Taylor Sea with Nouvelle-Arcadie in the foreground. Nearer yet, almost at the foot of the rise I had climbed, was Liberté and its fields. To the east I couldn't see much, because of the trees, but it seemed to be more forested hills. Overhead was the huge yellow ball of Groombridge 1618. The wind whipped through the tree-tops around and below me, making them ripple like a field of wheat back home, while clouds swooped by close overhead.

Maybe it was cowardice that made me decide not to run on after Adrienne. I told myself, however, that my chances of rescuing her by plunging into an unknown forest, without food or any sort of equipment,

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would be poor. I had better go back to Liberté and raise a posse.

I ran most of the way back. It was downhill until I reached the beach. I met the oecusaurus coming up the trail again, but I dodged past it without trying to hide. It snorted at me but kept on about its business.

IV

PRESIDENT LOUIS MOTTA stroked his chin and said: "So, one transgressor of the law expects me to overturn the village to succor another from the results of your joint folly, no?"

"Yes, monsieur," I said.

"Then, you mistake yourself. Such an expedition would fail, in view of the Cimbrians' superiority of armament. If they have not killed her already, they would do so if attacked. The attack would cost many of our lives, which we cannot afford, with all two of the Cimbrians and the Activists at enmity with us."

"But if you let them think they can carry off anybody they meet with impunity —"

"That's *my* responsibility, monsieur, and I pray you not to concern yourself with it. I may add that mademoiselle Herz will not be an insupportable loss to our community. She was always a malcontent and a railer, without due respect for the will of the people as embodied in their chief officer. Now if you will excuse me, I have business of the most urgent."

I left Motta's office and started back towards the guest-house, wondering what to do next. Then — well, this just shows how little my own initiative had to do with the happenings on this planet. I ran into Carl Adorn, who said: "What passes, monsieur? Has there been a calamity?"

I told him about Adrienne, Motta, and the Cimbrians.

He tut-tutted. "This is a grave matter. Come to my house — not now, with me, lest it rouse our good president, but in an hour or so."

WHEN I GOT there, I found that he had rounded up a few like-minded Passivists, who had brought an assortment of gear and supplies.

Adorn explained: "We dare not go out ourselves against the orders of Motta; and even if we did, he probably has reason about the futility of an attack on the Cimbrian camp. But you are a free agent, and nobody is likely to stop one of your size in any case. So if you will try a rescue all alone, we can furnish you with all the means we have. Here are a map, a compass, a knife, a hatchet, matches, food, and everything else we can think of. I regret only that

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we cannot add a rapid-fire gun or a few grenades."

"Thanks," I said. (I never argued, which shows what a wishy-washy character I have.) "When would be a good time to go?"

"During the hour of the siesta, after dinner. And here is a package for Adrienne, in case they are holding her for ransom. It contains soap, brush and comb, and such things. Do you speak Intermundos?"

"After a fashion."

"Good. Some of these Cimbrians might also."

I looked over the supplies and said: "Can somebody fasten a good strong knife-blade to a pole?"

"I can," said a man. "I make the knives. What sort of pole?"

"I'll get it," I said.

I went into the forest and cut a sapling. When the siesta-time came I slipped out, carrying my spear and other junk. I wore my bush-shirt and shorts, and to hell with utopian customs. I needed the pockets, and besides I didn't want to be stung again.

IT TOOK A week of floundering, getting lost, escaping the local fauna, and eating most of my food before I found the Cimbrian camp. But the time was not wasted. Every day as I tramped the game-trails, I practiced throwing my spear. I must have thrown that thing at five thousand trees. The first day I could hit nothing. The second day my arm was so sore I could hardly throw. By the fifth day I was getting pretty good.

When I found the Cimbrians, I circled round at a good distance, locating the big fenced meadow where they kept their horses. The meadow had real grass, which I hadn't seen on Turania. I suspected it had been brought from Earth to support the nags.

In the course of my circle, I found a stream that flowed away from the Cimbrian camp. When I drank from it I was astonished to find it warm. No stream flowed into the camp from the other direction, so I thought the Cimbrians must have built their camp around a hotspring, of which there were several in this country. When the first night came, I crawled close until I could hear the Cimbrians' twittering voices and see their fires. They sent a sentry out to patrol, but he did his job in a perfunctory manner, marching around the camp in a small circle and making all the noise in the world. Big and clumsy as I am, I avoided him.

When day came, I pulled back and climbed a tree that gave a view of the camp. The Cimbrians had the carcass of a reptile hung up by its feet, and whenever one of them got hungry he cut off a steak and broiled

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it over a fire on a pointed stick. I supposed they had a due proportion of females, but I couldn't tell because sexual dimorphism is slight in this species.

Of Adrienne Herz I could see no sign, but then she might have been in one of the log cabins. The biggest of these was built right over the hot spring. The water steamed as it flowed out under the wall.

ON THE SECOND night, there was a thunderstorm, so I could creep closer than before. I was within fifty yards of the camp when the sentry came out for his rounds. Another Cimbrian came with him, arguing. While I couldn't understand their twitter, I gathered that the sentry didn't want to slosh around in the dark, but the other insisted. If that was it, the sentry lost.

I got behind a tree as he passed me. I could hardly see him. When his back was to me, I stepped out and raised my spear.

Something warned him, despite the noise and darkness. He turned and fumbled with his gun. I thought I was done for, but the gun didn't go off. I imagined him to be a tree-trunk and let fly with the spear.

It hit. He fell, dropping his musket, and thrashed about; by the time I ran up to him he was almost still. He twittered feebly at me. I suppose I should have brained him with my hatchet, but I'm soft-hearted about animals.

I pulled the spear out of him, picked up his gun, and saw why he hadn't shot me. There was a piece of thin leather-bark tied around the lock to keep the wet out, and he had to untie this before he could fire.

Having been something of a gun-crank, I knew pretty well how this firearm would work. I searched the Cimbrian and found his powder-horn (only it was a bucket-shaped leather container), his bag of balls, and another bag with thin little pieces of animal-skin for wadding. By the time I finished, the Cimbrian seemed dead.

THE NEXT THING would be to convince the Cimbrians that they were surrounded and besieged. First I had to wait for the rain to stop. I deserve no credit for thinking out this campaign; being full of suppressed romanticism and all, I've read millions of words about fighting and adventuring on Earth in old times. I had only to imagine myself an American Indian, a medieval outlaw, or some such bushwhacker.

When the rain stopped, I couldn't untie the gun right away because of the drip from the trees. I was lying in a hol-

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low, and waiting, when a twittering from the camp told me the Cimbrians were getting curious about their sentry. They put more wood on their fire, and a big party came out.

When I saw they were coming towards me, I wriggled away to one side and untied the gun-lock. They found the sentry's body and clustered round it, chattering. I put the gun to my shoulder. It was awkward, as the stock was shaped for Cimbrian arms and shoulders, and I couldn't see the sights. I cocked it and pulled the trigger. There was a click and a little shower of sparks, but no shot.

I cocked the gun again, raised the firing-pan cover, scooped out the powder, replaced it by a pinch from my bucket, and tried again. The musket went off with a terrific bang and flash. I don't know if I hit any Cimbrians, but the group over the corpse flew apart as each Cimbrian dived for cover. A couple fired wildly in my general direction.

WHEN MY SIGHT returned after the flash, I groped away from there on a circuit round the camp. When I had gone nearly halfway, I stopped and reloaded, listening to the chorus of excited Cimbrian voices. Reloading a gun like that in the dark, without making any noise, is one of the toughest jobs you can imagine. You wrap a patch round the ball; place it on the muzzle of the upright barrel; force it into the barrel, with a bullet-starting lever hinged to the muzzle; and hammer or push it down the rest of the way with the ramrod. As these guns were rifled, it took a lot of push, but I didn't dare pound the rod down.

From the sounds, I judged the Cimbrians were spreading out to hunt me. I started hunting them in my turn. Soon I got close enough to one to stick my spear into him before he saw me. He screeched and his gun went off. It didn't hit me, but there was an outburst of Cimbrian chatter. My victim pulled loose and stumbled back to the camp. The flash brought all the others down upon me. I moved off to one side again, caught one against the campfire, and let him have it. The musket's kick nearly ruined me. I must have overcharged the gun in the dark. But now I had two muskets. I had an advantage in that there was only one of me, so I didn't have to worry about killing anybody on my side.

After more twittering, all the Cimbrians ran back to the camp and piled into the houses. I could see musket-barrels sticking out of the windows. Some of them moved things to make a rough barrier around the camp.

I fired a few more shots at

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long intervals to keep them awake and unhappy. When the first gray of the long Turanian dawn appeared through the trees, I crept forward and called out.

INTERMUNDOS is the interplanetary pidgin, based mainly on Terran tongues. It was developed to be speakable by different species; hence it is phonetically simple, with only seven consonants and three vowels. It allows for variation in pronunciation: thus the *s* may stand for any voiceless fricative like *f* and *h;* *n* may be any nasal, and so on. (At that, it gives trouble to some species like the Serians, who can't make nasal sounds.) Like most artificial languages, it has a grammar of the uninflected isolating type, like Chinese, because that's the easiest to learn. Having a rigid word-order, it is good only for bare statements; and it takes twice as long to make them as in any natural language.

I called: *"Ula las Sinvlianu! Na aki sal ain knaavu vun saaisu vun vuus?"* meaning "Cimbrians! Where's your chief?" You see what I mean?

There was moving about in the camp. More gun-barrels pointed in my direction. I repeated, and then a fluty Cimbrian voice called back in Intermundos: "Who are you and what do you want?"

"You are surrounded."

"So I see, but who are you?"

"We are the Earthmen."

"Where did you get guns?" asked the voice.

"None of your business. Where is the woman you took?"

"None of your business. How many are you?"

"About three hundred. Do you still want to fight?"

"If you attack, we will kill the woman."

"Ah, then she is alive!" I said.

"She will not be for long, if you start shooting."

"If you kill her, we will kill all of you."

"If we give her up, you will kill us anyway; so we will keep her. But we will parley if you will send a man in."

"We will, if you will keep to your camp during the parley and let our man leave unharmed, whatever the outcome."

"He must come unarmed and alone," said the Cimbrian.

I STUCK MY spear in the ground, leaned my muskets against a tree, and walked into the camp. As I climbed over the barricade, the Cimbrians swarmed out, pointing guns and twittering. When the leader identified himself, I said: "About this woman. I must see her to know if she is alive and well."

"This way," he said, and led

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me through the crowd to the center of the camp, where the big cabin had been built over the hot spring. "Twi-an!" he called.

Adrienne came to the door. She gave a shriek, grabbed me round the neck, and kissed me all over the face. I was so embarrassed I hardly knew what to do.

"You have come!" she cried. "I hoped you would, but I was in despair. Do we go right now, no?"

"Not yet," I said; "this is a parley."

"But if you have a big army . . ."

"They still have you." I didn't dare come right out and say this was a bluff, because of the remote chance that some Cimbrian might know French. "First, how have you been?"

"Well enough, though I cowered myself in the wash-house all night, hoping that your bullets would not pierce the walls."

"Are you the washerwoman?"

"But yes! Look inside."

I saw piles of plates and other gear around the hot spring. Adrienne's method was to put a lot of these things in a big net-bag and dunk them in the steaming pool. She pointed to a couple of wooden tubs, saying: "They make me scrub their backs. It's hard to get things really clean, though. These savages have no soap."

"Well, I can fix that, but you'd have to take care — oh-oh, that gives me an idea. Here's a package from the people at Liberté."

I OPENED the bundle. Adrienne squealed with delight. I handed her the cake of soap and said: "Let fall this into the hot spring. Then come out and stand close to me while I talk with the chief. Stand by for anything." I turned to the chief. "This woman is not good to us here," I said. "If you are going to keep her till she dies, you might as well kill her now. So, for the last time, will you give her up or must we regretfully kill you all?"

"You would not kill us all," he said. It's hard to interpret those feline expressions, but he seemed to have a slight grin.

"Why not?"

"Then whom would there be for you to fight?"

"You mean you think we like fighting with you?"

"Of course. We would not kill all of you, for the same reason. What is life without an enemy?"

"That is not our feeling. If we want to quarrel, we can do so among ourselves. We want you to let our woman go and never molest us again."

The chief scratched his headfur. "You ask us to die of boredom. We might as well kill you

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and Twi-an now and defy your army."

I was rambling away from the wash-house as if I weren't going anywhere, but winding towards the place where I had entered the camp. Adrienne followed close behind.

"Perhaps," said the chief, "we could agree on a series of challenge-battles instead of these raids."

"What do you mean?"

"Every so often each side would choose an equal number of their best fighters. These could slaughter each other while the rest of us looked on."

I WAS DEALING with a psychology like that of a medieval knight or a primitive warrior, to whom fighting is worthwhile for its own sake. I must be very careful . . .

A Cimbrian ran up and chittered at the chief. The latter whirled on me. "So! There is no Terran army! It was all your doing!"

He yelped to the others, who pointed and cocked their guns with a rattle of clicks.

There was a sound behind us like the cough of some great beast; then a rumble, a swish, and a chorus of chirps from the Cimbrians, who started back towards the wash-house.

Adrienne and I turned to see the wash-house flying straight up and falling apart into single logs. The hot spring had erupted.

The Cimbrians ran towards the geyser, which rose to a height of more than a hundred feet. They checked their rush and tumbled back, as logs and boiling water began to fall upon them. Their shrieking was almost drowned in the roar of the geyser.

I grabbed Adrienne's wrist and pulled her over the barricade. We ran. I snatched up the two muskets, handed one to Adrienne, slung the other, picked up my spear, and ran on.

Some Cimbrians saw us. There was a crackle of musket-shots, and some balls clipped the twigs about us. We ran faster, stumbling over roots. I led her around towards the meadow and opened the gate in the fence.

THE GEYSER kept the Cimbrians too disorganized for prompt pursuit. By the time they boiled out of their village in all directions, I had untied the bridles of two horses from their stakes. I handed the bridles to Adrienne, saying: "Hold them tightly!"

She took them in a gingerly manner. The horses were as scared as she was, rolling their eyes and pulling.

"Please, monsieur!" she wailed. "I can't hold them!" They were skidding her along the grass.

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I chopped through all the other bridles. When I finished, I heard Cimbrians whooping. I took the bridles from Adrienne, hitched them round my arm, and clasped my hands in front of me. "Put your foot there and mount."

When she had done so, I said: "Hold the mane, grip the animal's body with your legs, duck if you see a branch coming, and *don't fall off!*"

"I'll t-try not to," she said. "I have done this before, you know."

I vaulted on to the other horse (since they weren't saddled). The freed horses were milling round. My skittish beast calmed down when he felt my weight. I didn't know the Cimbrians' system of guidance, but by slapping and pulling on the reins I got the animal turned towards the rest of the herd, and a kick sent him bounding in among them. Then I beat the horses with the shaft of my spear until they all bolted through the gate. My horse and Adrienne's followed. I lost my spear in the crush; I was running out of hands and could only wish I'd been born a Virunian with four. The horses streamed out past the Cimbrian camp. Cimbrians flitted about and fired a few shots. The horses ran faster, spreading out into the gloom of the trees. Some tripped and fell but got up again.

Soon the camp was out of sight and sound. The horses spread out and slowed down. Some stopped to nibble. Adrienne was off at the limit of vision.

When I finally got to her I gathered up her reins and led her horse while guiding my own away from the Cimbrian camp. When we were safe, she asked: "What did you do to the source, monsieur?"

"When I was a boy my father took me to Yellowstone Park. They warn you not to drop soap in the geysers, because it makes them erupt out of turn."

"How you are marvelous!"

"Aw, Adrienne!" I said. "I'm just lucky."

V

THE HORSES got so skittish at the sight of a swarm of human beings that we had to get off and lead them into Liberté. The Passivists went wild over us, all but President Louis Motta. He hopped up on a stool and harangued the crowd: "Fools! Do you know what this assassin has done? He has brought the whole mass of the aliens upon us. They will burn; they will massacre; they will utterly destroy us! And you acclaim him!"

"What do you expect us to do?" said a Passivist.

"Arrest him and the Herz, and

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hold them to give to the Cimbrians when they arrive. It's our only hope."

The crowd looked astonished and uncertain.

"Is that so?" said I, unslinging the gun from my back. "Get ready, Adrienne. The first one who touches us —"

"No, no," said Adrienne. "Launch that old miserable from his taboret; me, I'll manage the crowd.

"Down, poltroon!" I said, pushing Motta so he had to jump off. Adrienne leaped up in his place and began orating. (If the dear girl had a fault, it was a tendency — along with most women and especially French-speaking women — to screech when excited.) She yelled at them like one of those bloodthirsty characters out of the French Revolution: "... You think you can deal with these creatures? That they will take a couple of human souls and go? They are not after us. What they want is the war, the fighting, the bloodshed. It's their pleasure, their sport, their ideal."

MOTTA SHOUTED: "This is militaristic propaganda, the thing we fled Earth to escape! Psychology has proved that there's no combative instinct!"

"You don't believe me?" continued Adrienne. "Ask Jules Egli if there haven't been peoples like that on Earth; he knows Terran history. You've a choice, not of giving us up or retaining us, but of fighting or being killed ... Motta is no good for leading a war. He knows nothing of it, and it's against his principles. Choose another leader, one who knows about such things, one who has already shown the greatest address, audacity, intrepidity, and ingenuity in such ardent matters. Make *him* your general ..."

When I realized she was pointing at me, I was so embarrassed that if there hadn't been a crowd all round me I should have sneaked off and hidden. Next thing I knew, the Passivists were slapping my back, making burlesque salutes, and asking for orders, while Motta screamed about unconstitutionality and burst into tears.

A couple of other Passivists got up and started to make speeches too. I saw that they would go on orating until the Cimbrians came, under the impression that, if only they talked big enough, the nasty part of warfare would take care of itself. I dragged Adrienne, Carl Adorn, Maximilian Wyss, and the man who made my spear out of the crowd and asked them into the guest-house. It was empty.

"Where's Ramaswami?" I asked.

Wyss said: "The tender is up

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making contact with your mother-ship. It will return in five or six days."

"Pest!" I said. "I might have talked Captain Kubala into lending us a machine-gun. Well, let's see what we have."

FOUR DAYS LATER I had the quaintest army you ever saw. At that, I could never have done as much as I did if it hadn't been for the length of the Turanian days. There were about fifty warriors armed with improvised weapons. There were spears like the one I had taken to the Cimbrian camp, axes, hammers, clubs, wrenches, knives, and a couple of swords converted from scythe-blades. For defense I had all the women making wicker shields, two and a half feet square, with rope handles, from those reeds north of the village.

I nearly went mad trying to keep the Libertéans' minds on their duties. The minute I took my eyes off them, they would start speech-making, or wander off to loaf or take care of their own business. By the fourth day, I was none too popular. The people grumbled that the Cimbrians weren't coming, after all, and all this drilling and arming was a waste of time. They called me a dictator and a Napoleon. A few days more, and Motta could have staged a counter-revolution. I sent a messenger to Vaud on Nouvelle-Arcadie, asking for help, but the messenger never came back.

ON THE fourth day, some of my fighters were throwing spears while others marched up and down the village and pretended to charge and retreat. I still didn't know how to cope with the Cimbrians' firearms. My best plan was to hold everybody behind the inner stockade while I shot our two muskets. If the Cimbrians tried to climb this wall, my people could knock them off as they came without much exposing themselves. I was worrying about these things when the lookout called down: *"Holà!* Monsieur Fay! They issue from the woods!"

I banged the dinner-gong. The people in the fields ran for the inner stockade. The confusion was indescribable.

"They have climbed the outer palisade!" called the lookout. A minute later, there was a crackle of shots. The lookout fell off his platform into the middle of the street.

The Passivists wailed: "Oh, this is terrible!" "We shall never succeed against these beasts with their fearful guns!" "What unhappiness! We are already beaten!"

"Adrienne!" I yelled. "Egli! Where are you?" I gathered up my two muskets and ran to the

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east side of the village. I climbed up on the step and fired one gun at the oncoming Cimbrians. Then I ducked down, ran a few paces along the step, and fired the other. This was to make them think we had more than one rifleman.

The last of the Passivists reached the east gate, which was slammed in the faces of the Cimbrians. My two loaders, Adrienne and Jules Egli, found me. I already had one gun nearly reloaded and presently fired at the Cimbrians from close range. This time, when the smoke cleared away, I had the satisfaction of seeing a Cimbrian lying on the ground. Others were trying to boost one of their number over the stockade. I ran to the place and hit the Cimbrian over the head as he came up. Then my helpers handed me another loaded gun.

MY OFFICERS had got the army into order and put them on the stockade. Relying on surprise, the Cimbrians hadn't brought any scaling-ladders or other siege-tools. They'd come damned close to success, too. Now they ran up and down outside the stockade, shooting when they saw the top of somebody's head. After I had laid out another with a musket-shot, their leaders called them back. Carrying their dead and wounded, they trailed out through the outer gate and into the woods — all but a few who sat down with their backs to the outer wall. They were too far to hit with these short guns, but near enough to watch us.

As the day wore on, we heard sounds of carpentry from the woods. Since nobody would climb the sentry-tower again, because of what happened to the first lookout, I went up it myself. The Cimbrians were making equipment. I couldn't see details under the shadow of the trees, but I could imagine scaling-ladders, battering-rams, mantlets, and torches to throw into the village. Once they got in, I wouldn't have given a brass farthing for my utopians' chances. Though a sensible folk in most ways, the Arcadians were so unused to war that the thought of it made them as mercurial as children.

I called a council of war in the guest-house. The day was hot and sticky; we sweated, even in our nudity. Adrienne said: "How about an attack, to scatter them now while they make their ladders?"

Adorn shook his head. "One good discharge and our people would flee all the length of the way to Nouvelle-Arcadie."

"But it takes them time to charge their guns, the same as us," she insisted. "Once the first salvo is pulled, we could close before they could fire another.

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And the Cimbrians don't have those — what are those little pikes they used to put on the ends of guns?" she asked me.

"Bayonets."

"Exactly. So when we came to hands, they would have nothing to fight with but clumsy clubs."

FRANKHAUSER, the knife-maker, said: "No, when our people see half their number lying in their blood, they will not think of that any more. And even if they did, the Cimbrians need not shoot all their guns the first time. They could reserve some for a second discharge."

"Well," said Adorn, "we can't wait for them to batter down our poor little wall and troop in."

"How many could the boats carry?" I asked, pretty much in despair myself.

Adorn said: "Perhaps sixty, if they are crowded in, in one voyage. We might evacuate the infants to Nouvelle-Arcadie, but we should have to detach some of our combatants to paddle."

"The women could paddle," said Wyss.

Adrienne said: "Too late for that. The Cimbrians could catch them between here and the beach. Gerald, my old, how many more gun-shots have you?"

I thought. "Perhaps twenty, if I don't stop a bullet myself."

"And if it doesn't rain and get your powder wet." She turned to Wyss. "What about that? Is it likely to rain?"

"It's probable," he said. "We have had a real drouth: five days without one drop."

Adrienne and I stared at one another and we both started to speak: "If we could wet *their* powder . . ." "So no guns at all would go off . . ."

I said to Wyss: "Can you make a rain here? Now?"

"If I had my iodide-generator. The humidity is high enough."

"Where is your apparatus? On the beach?"

"Alas, yes; and they could shoot me enroute. But I will take the chance if you wish." The little man looked unhappy, but it's been said that the true hero is he who goes ahead, particularly when terrified.

I THOUGHT fast. Somebody should go to cover him. Adrienne and Egli and I knew how to load the muskets; Adrienne and I knew how to shoot, for I'd given her a little practice on the way to Liberté. I stood up and said: "Come, my friend. We go to the beach. Adrienne, take this gun and cover us from the west gate. If I don't get back, you and Jules will have to man the artillery, and Carl shall be general."

"Oh, let me go instead," she

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said. "You're our best shooter, as well as our commandant —"

"Orders are orders. Carl, get our infantry together and explain the plan. We hope to drench them and then charge them."

A vulgar American expression tells how scared I was inside; it shows what you'll do to look good in front of the girl you love. It was a little before we reached Liberté that I found I was in love with Adrienne. Of course I said nothing. I knew my faults too well to suppose I could attract such a girl, despite the demonstration in the Cimbrian camp. She had merely been glad to see another human being and would have kissed Louis Motta.

I had given hard thought to the matter, though. If I dared not speak my piece to Adrienne, I might quit my job and join the Arcadians to be near her and silently worship her. This prospect was grim, for I had found why — despite the Arcadians' many virtues — I didn't really like the place. The atmosphere reminded me of Scorpion Rock, Arizona, to which my father moved when ill-health made him retire from the managership of World News, and where I spent a miserable boyhood. My father is a very intellectual, sophisticated, internationalized man, and some of these attitudes rubbed off on me. The local folks weren't, and the boys made life hell for me until I grew too big to be bullied. Give me a big, anonymous city where you needn't be sociable with anybody, just because he lives near you.

WITH ADRIENNE posted at the west gate, Wyss and I scooted for the beach, crouching. We made it without being seen. Wyss read dials and diddled with gadgets while I lay in the sand at the upper edge of the beach, my musket pointing towards the side of Liberté from which the Cimbrians might come.

At last Wyss got his generator going. "Are you ready?" I whispered.

"Not quite. I must adjust . . ."

"Holy name of a name! Hurry!"

"In a moment . . ."

Bang!

The shot came, not from Liberté, but from my left rear, where the outer stockade ran down to the water. A Cimbrian had waded round the end; seeing us, he'd taken a quick shot, which missed. I rolled over and sat up; but by the time I had my sights in line, the Cimbrian had slipped around the end of the stockade out of sight.

I jumped up and started in that direction when it occurred to me that the shot would bring the rest. I'd better get back to

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Liberté. Maximilian Wyss was already running like a rabbit.

I caught up with him halfway to the gate. We ran side by side. Then three Cimbrians appeared, running towards us through a melon-patch. "Drop flat!" I shouted to Wyss.

I DID, BUT he didn't. Two of their guns and mine went off at the same time. One of their group fell; so did Wyss. The one who had fired, but had not been hit, started to reload; while the one who had not fired ran towards me. The beastly thing about muzzle-loaders is not only that it takes so long to load them, but also that you have to stand up to do so. There I was, lying in the dirt with an empty flintlock, while this fellow trotted up to put a ball through me at spitting-range.

Bang! A puff of smoke from the gate, and the running Cimbrian spun round with a screech and fell.

I jumped up, gathered Wyss up under one arm, and ran for the gate. Beef sometimes has advantages. More Cimbrians appeared. There were several shots, but all of them passed safely aft of me.

Inside, Adrienne was reloading like mad, her eyes shining. "Is the poor little Wyss dead?"

"Indeed not, young lady," said Wyss in a muffled voice. "I am wounded in the leg, and if it is not repaired I shall bleed to death. But I give you your rain."

I turned Wyss over to the women. Adorn had collected the men by the east gate. Adrienne cried: "Gerald! Regard the beach!"

A cluster of Cimbrians was standing round the meteorological apparatus, I suppose trying to figure out what we had been up to.

It was a long shot, but I rested the barrel on the top of the stockade and squeezed it off. When the smoke cleared, the Cimbrians were scattering, but one had knocked over the stand on which the generator stood. We groaned.

SOMEBODY SHOUTED to come to the east side. I went. Cimbrians were pouring through the gate in the outer stockade, carrying ladders, a ram made of a trunk with the branches trimmed to stubs for handles, and other siege-gear. Adrienne and I began shooting into them, but they shot back so that we could barely duck down after each shot to avoid being riddled.

On they came. Carl Adorn detached a few men to take care of scaling-ladders; I pushed one ladder over backwards with a gun-butt. The ram hit the gate with a boom and a cracking of strained wood.

There came another boom — but this wasn't the ram; it was

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thunder. A drop hit my hand. A thunder-cloud had formed over the village. In five seconds the rain came down with a roar. There were a couple more shots from the Cimbrians, and the damp *sput* of misfires—a welcome sound to hear.

I jumped down and ran to the east gate, which still bulged and shook from the blows of the ram. I said: "Carl, help me pull back this bolt!"

The big timber that held the gate closed was so cracked and bent from the blows that it wouldn't move. While we struggled with it, the ram struck again, boom! The gate flew open, sagging on shattered hinges. Adorn and I leaped back. The momentum of the ram carried the front end of it into the village.

I stepped forward, grabbed the stub-end of a branch, and pulled the tree-trunk inward, the way it was going. There was only one of me to twenty Cimbrians, but they're lightly built and weren't expecting a pull in that direction. The whole double string of them, ten on a side, came staggering into Liberté before they had the sense to let go. I picked up my musket and began whacking them with the butt. The Passivists swarmed about with hammers and hatchets; in ten seconds the Cimbrians were all either down or fled.

We crowded through the gate and fell upon the Cimbrians outside. There wasn't any formal charge, just a brawl — forty-odd naked men, slipping and scrambling, with mud and blood running off them in the rain, tearing into sixty or seventy Cimbrians with their hair plastered in clumps by the wet. I slugged with my gun-butt until the stock broke. Then I picked up a dropped shield and kept on swinging the musket-barrel. Even such a simple defense as a wicker shield gives a big advantage over somebody who has none. The Cimbrians wielded gun-butts, knives, and hatchets, but to less effect than we did.

The Cimbrians began falling back towards the outer gate. They got jammed going through it, and we hacked and hammered and thrust and stabbed until we won through the gate over a carpet of fallen Cimbrians.

"Keep after them!" I shouted in a hoarse croak. I must have been yelling all the time. "Don't let them make a stand!"

The Cimbrians who had got through the gate ran off into the woods. The rain had stopped, though it still ran off the trees. We caught no more Cimbrians, because they run faster than men. We did come on some untying their horses, chased them away, and took the horses our-

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selves. We had four killed (besides the sentry) to at least sixteen of them, but nearly all of us had cuts, bruises, or graver hurts.

I RECALLED most of our men by shouting and started back. We entered the village expecting heroes' welcomes.

But nobody met us. In fact there seemed to be nobody there until Louis Motta ran out. "You fools!" he screamed. "Vaud came, but not to aid us! He has taken all the women and infants back to Nouvelle-Arcadie! He and his men assembled the littles, and that menace made the women go quietly."

We stared stupidly, then ran through the village and down to the beach. All the canoes were gone, but, in plain sight a hundred yards out, the whole flotilla bobbed on its way to the island.

The men jumped and howled, but that didn't stop the rise and fall of the paddles. President Motta declaimed: "Now you see what comes of putting confidence in outsiders. Ten minutes sooner and you could have arrested this violation. But no, our great General Fay thinks not of that. This type takes every man in Liberté except Wyss and me, so there is nobody to warn you."

"Where were you?" I said. "Why didn't you warn us?"

"Because I was under the bed of Wyss, that's why. I hid myself there when I saw what they did, and I had no chance to get out until now. Wyss they did not hurt, but neither could they move him in his condition. Now, citizens, listen to me. Always have I been a man of peace, me, Louis Motta. I have offered the soft answer and turned the other cheek. But this, it is too much. I shall myself conduct you to vengeance and reparation . . ."

Motta was good when he got steamed up. Some grumbled and asked what was the matter with the general they had. I stammered something about being available, but Motta tore into me, denounced my incompetence, and had me twisting my big feet in the sand with nothing to say like a dumb schoolboy.

"First," he said, "we must build new boats to replace those that have been stolen . . ."

VI

I WATCHED Motta's new fleet paddle away with lugubrious feelings. Motta had refused to let me come along; I suppose for the obvious reasons. Although the prospect of a battle terrifies me, I wanted to rescue Adrienne myself. For three days I quarreled furiously with Motta. He had got his political grip back on his men and threatened to have me locked up

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if I opposed him. Adorn might have helped me if he hadn't been badly hurt in the fight at the outer gate. So I stood on the beach like a big booby, wondering if I ought not to have throttled Motta and chanced a fight with his men.

I slouched back to the guest-house to drink Turanian wine with Arthur Ramaswami. While the new canoes had been building, the tender had come back.

"Cheer up, Gerry," said Ramaswami. "We're taking off for good in a few days, and you can forget all this. You've been hero enough for one trip."

I had drunk myself fuzzy, and was blubbering into my mug, when there was a scuff of feet and a Passivist dashed in. "Monsieur Fay!" he cried between gasps. "We are fools again! All is lost, because you were not there to lead us!"

I focussed on the man with an effort. "What's lost? And how did you get back so soon?"

"It is a disaster of the most insupportable! Listen; I tell you. We disembark at Elysée in full daylight — and there's no one! But nobody! So, we march like real soldiers into the town. We assemble in the square. Motta makes a harangue, full of the noblest sentiments. We are fired with patriotism. The perfidious enemy has fled, says he, but has taken our dear ones. Very well, we shall march the length and breadth of the island seeking the cowardly traitor. Motta draws us up in a column. He puts himself at the head. He gives the signal. Maurice Rahn beats the drum. We march into the forest.

"THEN OUT OF nowhere come the forces of Vaud. They are not only more than we; they not only surprise us; they are better armed. While we have been making boats, Vaud has been improving upon our armament. Instead of our bucklers of osier, and our hatchets, his men have shields, helmets, and even some cuirasses of the bark of the leather-tree, bound with strips and hoops of iron. They have swords and spears of iron. They throw the spears and precipitate themselves upon us with the swords, menacing us with horrible cries. Our musketeers shoot in a wild manner; they hit two or three Activists. Then the foe is upon us.

"Thus, Motta is struck down in the first charge. The rest flee. Some are cut down; some are made prisoners. A bare half escape in our boats, mostly without weapons. And afterwards?"

I looked at Ramaswami, who said: "The old man won't lend you guns. He might have done so to help you repulse the Cimbrians, but not for an inter-human feud."

I said to the Passivist: "I

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don't suppose it occurred to Motta to send scouts out on all sides?"

"But no, monsieur, why should it? Now that you say it, I see that this would be sage. But it is not a thing that would suggest itself to one who knows nothing of war."

"And I don't suppose anybody had time to chop holes in Vaud's boats before shoving off?"

"No."

"Then it seems to me as if the game were over."

"BUT MONSIEUR, we debated the matter during our return, and we want you for our general again. It was only the rhetoric of the foolish Motta, and the fact that you are an outsider, that made us abandon you before."

"Thanks, but what can I do? Vaud's got the guns, most of the men, and all the women and children. You might as well resign yourselves, and make your peace with him."

"Excuse me, but that's impossible. Even while we were paddling away, he stood on the shore and commanded us to return and submit. He menaced us that if we refused, he would never receive us but would have us shot at first view. One of us hurled an insult, and Vaud tried to pull a musket at us. He did not know how to make it work well, so he missed. But he has made his sentiments evident."

"Well, what then?"

"We want you to lead us. You have already accomplished the impossible, and you can do it again."

There didn't seem anything to do, though. I walked far up the beach to think. Night attacks — surprise attacks — psychological offensives — guerilla warfare —, all the rest of it. My fix was complicated by the fact that I didn't really want to kill Activists. It was easy to work up a battle-lust against the Cimbrians, who are another species. No doubt they felt the same about us. And I certainly didn't want any women or children killed. Or Adrienne.

I started to sit down on a log; then flinched at the memory of my sting. I looked at the log. No vespoid; but the memory started a train of thought.

THREE NIGHTS later, before dawn, we paddled up to the shore of Nouvelle-Arcadie, not at Elysée but a few hundred yards north of it. We climbed ashore looking like spooks from a Gothic novel. Each wore a coverall, a bag with eye-holes over his head, goggles over the bags, more bags on his feet, and work-gloves. The gloves, goggles, and coveralls we had borrowed from the tender's stores, as they were not weap-

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ons. The bags we made. Most of us carried our usual wicker shields and hand-weapons, but eight had large cloth bags tied shut. These bags buzzed ominously when jostled.

Carefully carrying our bags, we crept through the woods. The sky had begun to lighten when we sighted the camp. They had a sentry pacing the beach but hadn't thought to watch the landward side. Because of the lack of large animals on the island, Elysée had never been walled.

We crept up to the edge of the fields. I passed the word, when we were drawn up in a line, to walk briskly towards the village until we were discovered, then to run. We started.

We were halfway across when the sentry cried: *"Halte-là!"* and then: *"Mon dieu!"* He fired his musket.

We swept across the field without caring for the vegetables. The shot brought out the Activists, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes. At the sight of us they gave back with cries of horror.

As soon as we got inside the village, each of us that had a bag slashed it open with his knife. Out came a big battered vespoid-nest and a swarm of furious insects. As the Activists boiled out with weapons, the vespoids set upon them. They attacked us, too, but our clothes kept out all but a few stings, whereas with the Activists they had a clear field.

In a few seconds the Activists and their captives were a screaming mob running for the woods and the sea, jumping and slapping.

Half an hour later we had gathered up their weapons and fished President Henri Vaud out of Taylor Sea. The vespoids had scattered. The Activists, seeing that we had won this throw, straggled back. Adrienne had one eye nearly shut from a sting on the cheek but was still the loveliest thing I'd ever seen. She looked at our masked faces. "Is one of you Monsieur Fay?" she asked.

"I am," I said, taking off my disguise.

She grabbed me again as she had done in the Cimbrian camp. "I knew you'd come," she said at last.

"Ahem," said Vaud. "What do you do now, misbegotten miscreant?"

"Me?" said I, looking innocent. "Why, nothing. Your people have a perfect democracy; let them settle their differences in a civilized manner. My party will use the guns only to keep order. Let's go for a walk, Adrienne."

On the beach I said: "I must go back to the mainland at once, my little."

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"Go? But you can't — I mean to say, why?"

"The tender takes off this afternoon, and I must be there if I don't want to spend the next ten or fifteen years — Terran years, that is — on Turania."

"Couldn't we persuade you to stay? The Cimbrians still menace us."

"No, my dear. I have my own business. But I shall certainly miss you." I gave a histrionic sigh. "If I had a girl like you on Earth — but of course there aren't any."

"What is difficult about that?"

FOR A COUPLE of seconds I dared not breath for fear of spoiling something. "Why — uh — hey, you don't mean you'd marry me and go too, do you?"

"Certainly, stupid, if properly demanded. But didn't you tell me that in your civilization, the man offers the hand?"

Let us be drawing a veil over the next minute. Then I said: "Are you sure you want to leave? This has been your home since you were a child."

She frowned. "Gerald my adored, first, is it well heard that I have accepted you for love, and not for material advantages? Otherwise I'll take it back."

"D'accord."

"Well then, to tell the truth, this rustic paradise bores me to distraction. Our chiefs always tell us how ideal it is to live simply in a little village. Me, I think I prefer the big wicked cities, where something happens. I even want to learn to wear clothes. Perhaps I am one of those lascivious degenerates of whom Vaud has warned us."

"Well, let's degenerate together, then. I, too, had my fill of the simple life as a kid."

POLITICS RAGED in the village. At least five people were making speeches. One demanded Vaud's impeachment; another called for a new constitutional convention; a third urged that they make him dictator. Adrienne went to bid her parents farewell, while I gathered the borrowed ship's stores, which I loaded into a canoe. Without asking permission we shoved off and paddled eastward.

Turania's surprises weren't over. A swarm of figures appeared coming down to the beach. As I got closer I saw both men and Cimbrians. A couple of the latter carried modern-looking guns, but the rest seemed unarmed.

I swung the canoe around to be ready to flee.

Czeslaw Kubala bellowed: "Gerry Fay! Come on in! It's all right!"

We came in. These Cimbrians looked more civilized than the others. Though like them they grew their own fur coats, they wore broad belts with shiny

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gadgets on them. Captain Kubala wrung my hand and said: "Is this young lady going with us?"

"Yes. Do you remember Mademoiselle Herz, once the mail-girl of Liberté but now my fiancée?"

"Enchanted! Congratulations and felicitations. I expect a few more fugitives from paradise before we lift." Kubala indicated the shiniest Cimbrian. "Gerry, this is Captain — uh — Kiatiksu Satsitu, or that's how it comes out in Intermundos. He's skipper of the other ship whose tender you see."

"What other tender?" I said.

Kubala jerked his thumb. I saw a second steel nose above the trees. Kubala said: "Good Lord didn't you hear it come down?"

"My mind was on other things. But what about the Cimbrians?"

"They've got a ship in orbit, too. It seems they stopped by for the same reason we did, to see how their colony was coming."

CAPTAIN WHAT'S-HIS-NAME said in Intermundos: "We must apologize to you and to the terran colony, sir, for the harm you have sustained from our colonists. An indemnity shall be paid when this imbroglio is adjusted. We may remove our colony to the other side of the planet, where they will not soon again come in contact with you."

"Thanks," I said. "But why did they attack us?"

"We are a civilized folk, sir; nothing like this has been allowed on Cimbria for thousands of years. But some find our peaceful and orderly life uncongenial. A group of these restless persons gained permission to settle here, where they could live a life the opposite of ours: irregular, carefree, adventurous, even quarrelsome. We did not know they would come into conflict with your colony."

I asked: "Why are they armed with flintlocks? Modern guns I could understand, or being unarmed like our colonists I could understand; but why these archaic, obsolete weapons?"

"That was the doing of the Interplanetary Conservation Commission. The colonists wanted modern weapons; the Committee wanted to deny them all firearms lest they deplete the fauna. So this was a compromise." The Cimbrian paused. "Our people's aim was to set up a — what is that word which Earthmen use for an ideal society?"

"A utopia?"

"Thank you, sir, that is it. A utopia."

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Legend has it that the first dozen stories Isaac Asimov, then in his late teens, submitted to the leading science fiction magazine of the time, were returned; but that the thirteenth was "Trends," which saw print in 1939. Whether any, or all, of those twelve were accepted by other magazines later, we do not know. The point is that (1) he didn't hit the bull's-eye the first time, but had to sweat it out (2) by the time he made a sale to the market of his desire, he'd achieved an original, smooth, and distinctive style (3) due to his early difficulties, he's never become complacent about his writing, but works out each story as if he were still trying to make that first sale to a top science fiction magazine.

You don't have to take our word for these three points; Exhibit A appears below, and it also shows that—despite the fact that Dr. Asimov has become a topflight novelist, since 1939—he hasn't forgotten how to write short stories.

EACH AN EXPLORER

by Isaac Asimov

Illustrated by ORBAN

HERRMAN CHOUNS was a man of hunches. Sometimes he was right; sometimes he was wrong—about fifty-fifty. Still, considering that one has the whole universe of possibilities from which to pull a right answer, fifty-fifty begins to look pretty good.

Chouns wasn't always as pleased with the matter as might be expected. It put too much of a strain on him. People would huddle around a problem, making nothing of it, then turn to him and say, "What do you think, Chouns? Turn on the old intuition."

And if he came up with something that fizzled, the responsibility for that was made clearly his.

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Creatures were emerging from the huts, moving closer to the ship, with a kind of hesitating trust.

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His job, as Field Explorer, rather made things worse.

"Think that planet's worth a closer look?" they would say. "What do you think, Chouns?"

So it was a relief to draw a two-man spot for a change (meaning that the next trip would be to some low-priority spot, and the pressure would be off) and, on top of it, to get Allen Smith as partner.

Smith was as matter-of-fact as his name. He said to Chouns the first day out, "The thing about you is that the memory files in your brain are on extra-special call. Faced with a problem, you remember enough little things that maybe the rest of us don't come up with to make a decision. Calling it a hunch just makes it mysterious, and it isn't."

He rubbed his hair slickly back as he said that. He had light hair that lay down like a skull-cap.

Chouns, whose hair was very unruly, and whose nose was snub and a bit off-center, said softly (as was his way), "I think maybe it's telepathy."

"What!"

"Just a trace of it."

"Nuts!" said Smith, with loud derision (as was *his* way). "Scientists have been tracking psionics for a thousand years and gotten nowhere. There's no such thing: no precognition; no telkinesis; no clairvoyance; *and* no telepathy."

"I admit that, but consider this. If I get a picture of what each of a group of people are thinking—even though I might not be aware of what was happening—I could integrate the information and come up with an answer. I would know more than any single individual in the group, so I could make a better judgment than the others—sometimes."

"Do you have any evidence at all for that?"

Chouns turned his mild, brown eyes on the other. "Just a hunch."

THEY GOT along well. Chouns welcomed the other's refreshing practicality, and Smith patronized the other's speculations. They often disagreed, but never quarreled.

Even when they reached their objective, which was a globular cluster that had never felt the energy thrusts of a human-designed nuclear reactor before, increasing tension did not worsen matters.

Smith said, "Wonder what they do with all this data back on Earth. Seems a waste, sometimes."

Chouns said, "Earth is just beginning to spread out. No telling how far humanity will move out into the Galaxy, given a million years or so. All the data we can get on any world will come in handy some day."

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"You sound like a recruiting manual for the Exploration Teams. Think there'll be anything interesting in that thing." He indicated the visi-plate on which the no-longer distant cluster was centered like spilled talcum powder.

"Maybe. I've got a hunch—" Chouns stopped, gulped, blinked once or twice, and then smiled weakly.

Smith snorted. "Let's get a fix on the nearest stargroups and make a random pass through the thickest of it. One gets you ten, we find a McKomin ratio under O.2."

"You'll lose," murmured Chouns. He felt the quick stir of excitement that always came when new worlds were about to be spread beneath them. It was a most contagious feeling, and it caught hundreds of youngsters each year. Youngsters, such as he had been once, flocked to the Teams, eager to see the worlds their descendants some day would call their own, each an explorer—"

They got their fix, made their first close-quarters hyperspatial jump into the cluster, and began scanning stars for planetary systems. The computers did their work; the information files grew steadily, and all proceeded in satisfactory routine—until at system 23, shortly after completion of the jump, the ship's hyperatomic motors failed.

CHOUNS MUTTERED, "Funny. The analyzers don't say what's wrong."

He was right. The needles wavered erratically, never stopping once for a reasonable length of time, so that no diagnosis was indicated. And, as a consequence, no repairs could be carried through.

"Never saw anything like it," growled Smith. "We'll have to shut everything off and diagnose manually."

"We might as well do it comfortably," said Chouns, who was already at the telescopes. "Nothing's wrong with the ordinary space-drive, and there are two decent planets in this system."

"Oh? How decent and which ones?"

"The first and second out of four: Both water-oxygen. The first is a bit warmer and larger than Earth; the second a bit colder and smaller. Fair enough?"

"Life?"

"Both. Vegetation, anyway."

Smith grunted. There was nothing in that to surprise anyone; vegetation ocurred more often than not on water-oxygen worlds. And unlike animal life, vegetation could be seen telescopically—or, more precisely, spectroscopically. Only four photochemical pigments had ever been found in any plant form, and each could be detected by the nature of the light it reflected.

Chouns said, "Vegetation on

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both planets is chlorophyll-type, no less. It'll be just like Earth; real homey."

Smith said, "Which is closer?"

"Number two, and we're on our way. I have a feeling it's going to be a nice planet."

"I'll judge that by the instruments, *if* you don't mind," said Smith.

BUT THIS seemed to be one of Chouns' correct hunches. The planet was a tame one with an intricate ocean network that insured a climate of small temperature range. The mountain ranges were low and rounded, and the distribution of vegetation indicated high and widespread fertility.

Chouns was at the controls for the actual landing.

Smith grew impatient. "What are you picking and choosing for? One place is like another."

"I'm looking for a bare spot," said Chouns. "No use burning up an acre of plant life."

"What if you do?"

"What if I don't?" said Chouns, and found his bare spot.

It was only then, after landing, that they realized a small part of what they had tumbled into.

"Jumping space-warps," said Smith.

Chouns felt stunned. Animal life was much rarer than vegetation, and even the glimmerings of intelligence were far rarer still; yet here, not half a mile away from landing point, was a clustering of low, thatched huts that were obviously the product of a primitive intelligence.

"CAREFUL," said Smith, dazedly.

"I don't think there's any harm," said Chouns. He stepped out onto the surface of the planet with firm confidence; Smith followed.

Chouns controlled his excitement with difficulty. "This is terrific. No one's ever reported anything better than caves or woven tree-branches before."

"I hope they're harmless."

"It's too peaceful for them to be anything else. Smell the air."

Coming down to landing, the terrain—to all points of horizon, except where a low range of hills broke the even line—had been colored a soothing pale-pink, dappled against the chlorophyll-green. At closer quarters, the pale-pink broke up into individual flowers, fragile and fragrant. Only the areas in the immediate neighborhood of the huts were amber with something that looked like a cereal grain.

Creatures were emerging from the huts, moving closer to the ship with a kind of hesitating trust. They had four legs and a sloping body which stood three feet high at the shoulders. Their heads were set firmly on those shoulders, with bulging eyes

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(Chouns counted six) set in a circle and capable of the most disconcertingly independent motion. (*That makes up for the immovability of the head, thought Chouns.*)

Each animal had a tail that forked at the end, forming two sturdy fibrils that each animal held high. The fibrils maintained a rapid tremor that gave them a hazy, blurred look.

"Come on," said Chouns. "They won't hurt us; I'm sure of it."

THE ANIMALS surrounded the men at a cautious distance. Their tails made a modulated humming noise.

"They might communicate that way," said Chouns. "And I think it's obvious they're vegetarians." He pointed toward one of the huts, where a small member of the species sat on its haunches, plucking at the amber grain with his tails, and flicking an ear of it through his mouth like a man sucking a series of maraschino cherries off a toothpick.

"Human beings eat lettuce," said Smith, "but that doesn't prove anything."

More of the tailed creatures emerged, hovered about the men for a moment, then vanished off into the pink and green.

"Vegetarians," said Chouns, firmly. "Look at the way they cultivate the main crop."

The main crop, as Chouns called it, consisted of a coronet of soft, green spikes, close to the ground. Out of the center of the coronet grew a hairy stem which, at two-inch intervals, shot out fleshy veined buds that almost pulsated, they seemed so vitally alive. The stem ended at the tip with the pale pink blossoms that, except for the color, was the most Earthly thing about the plants.

The plants were laid out in rows and files with geometric precision. The soil about each was well-loosened and powdered with a foreign substance that could be nothing but fertilizer. Narrow passageways, just wide enough for an animal to pass along, criss-crossed the field and each passageway was lined with narrow sluice-ways, obviously for water.

THE ANIMALS were spread through the fields now, working diligently, heads bent. Only a few remained in the neighborhood of the two men.

Chouns nodded. "They're good farmers."

"Not bad," agreed Smith. He walked briskly toward the nearest of the pale-pink blooms and reached for one; but six inches short of it, he was stopped by the sound of tail-vibrations keening to shrillness, and by the actual touch of a tail upon his arm. The touch was delicate but firm,

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interposing itself between Smith and the plants.

Smith fell back, "What in Space—"

He had half reached for his blaster, when Chouns said, "No cause for excitement; take it easy."

Half a dozen of the creatures were now gathering about the two, offering stalks of grain humbly and gently, some using their tails, some nudging it forward with their muzzles.

Chouns said, "They're friendly enough. Picking a bloom might be against their customs; the plants probably have to be treated according to rigid rules. Any culture that has agriculture probably has fertility rites, and Lord knows what that involves. The rules governing the cultivation of the plants must be strict, or there wouldn't be those accurate measured rows. . . . Space, won't they sit up back home when they hear all this?"

The tail-humming shot up in pitch again, and the creatures near them fell back. Another member of the species was emerging from a larger hut in the center of the group.

"The chief, I suppose," muttered Chouns.

The new one advanced slowly, tail high, each fibril encircling a small black object. At a distance of five feet, its tail arched forward.

"He's giving it to us," said Smith, in astonishment, "and Chouns, for God's sake, *look* at it."

Chouns was doing so, feverishly. He choked out, "They're Gamow hyperspatial sighters. Those are ten thousand dollar instruments."

SMITH EMERGED from the ship again, after an hour within. He shouted from the ramp in high excitement. "They work. They're perfect. We're rich."

Chouns called back. "I've been checking through their huts. I can't find any more."

"Don't sneeze at just two. Good Lord, these are as negotiable as a handful of cash."

But Chouns still looked about, arms akimbo, exasperated. Three of the tailed creatures had dogged him from hut to hut—patiently, never interfering, but remaining always between him and the geometrically cultivated pale-pink blossoms. Now they stared multiply at him.

Smith said, "It's the latest model, too. Look here." He pointed to the raised lettering which said *Model X-20, Gamow Products, Warsaw, European Sector.*

Chouns glanced at it and said, impatiently, "What interests me is getting more. I *know* there are more Gamow sighters somewhere, and I want them." His cheeks were flushed and his breathing heavy.

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THE SUN was setting, the temperature dropped below the comfortable point. Smith sneezed twice, then Chouns.

"We'll catch pneumonia," snuffled Smith.

"I've got to make them understand," said Chouns, stubbornly. He had eaten hastily through a can of pork sausage, had gulped down a can of coffee, and was ready to try again.

He held the sighter high. "More," he said, "more," making encircling movements with his arms. He pointed to one sighter, then to the other, then to the imaginary additional ones lined up before him. "More."

Then, as the last of the sun dipped below the horizon, a vast hum arose from all parts of the field as every creature in sight ducked its head, lifted its forked tail, and vibrated it into screaming invisibility in the twilight.

"What in Space," muttered Smith, uneasily, "Hey, look at the blooms!" He sneezed again.

The pale pink flowers were shrivelling visibly.

Chouns shouted to make himself heard above the hum. "It may be a reaction to sunset. You know, the blooms close at night. The noise may be a religious observance of the fact."

A soft flick of a tail across his wrist attracted Chouns' instant attention. The tail he had felt belonged to the nearest creature; and now it was raised to the sky, toward a bright object low on the western horizon where, some moments earlier, the planet's sun had disappeared.

The tail bent downward to point to the sighter, then up again to the star.

Chouns said excitedly, "Of course—the inner planet; the other habitable one. These must have come from there." Then, reminded by the thought of space-travel, he cried in sudden shock, "Hey, Smith, the hyperatomic motors are still out."

Smith looked shocked, as though he had forgotten, too; then he recovered and mumbled, "I meant to tell you— They're all right."

"You fixed them?"

"Never touched them. But when I was testing the sighters, I used the hyperatomics and they worked. I didn't pay any attention at the time; I forgot there was anything wrong. Anyway, they worked."

"Then let's go," said Chouns at once. The thought of sleep never occurred to him.

NEITHER ONE slept through the six-hour trip. They remained at the controls in an almost drug-fed passion. Once again, they chose a bare spot on which to land.

It was hot with an afternoon sub-tropical heat; and a broad, muddy river moved placidly by them. The near bank was of

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hardened mud, riddled with large cavities.

The two men stepped out onto planetary surface and Smith cried hoarsely, "Chouns, look at that!"

Chouns shook off the other's grasping hand. He said. "The same plants! I'll be damned."

There was no mistaking the pale pink blossoms, the stalk with its veined buds, and the coronet of spikes below. Again there was the geometric spacing, the careful planting and fertilization, the irrigation canals.

Smith said, "We haven't made a mistake and circled—"

"Oh, look at the sun; it's twice the diameter it was before. And look there."

Out of the nearest burrows in the river bank, smoothly tan and sinuous objects, as limbless as snakes, emerged. They were a foot in diameter, ten feet in length. The two ends were equally featureless, equally blunt. Midway along their upper portions were bulges. All the bulges, as though on signal, grew before their eyes to fat ovals, split in two to form lipless gaping mouths that opened and closed with a sound like a forest of dry sticks clapping together.

Then, just as on the outer planet, once their curiosities were satisfied and their fears calmed, most of the creatures drifted away toward the carefully cultivated field of plants.

Smith sneezed. The force of expelled breath against the sleeve of his jacket raised a powdering of dust.

He stared at that with amazement, then slapped himself and said, "Damn it, I'm dusty." The dust rose, like a pale pink fog. "You, too," he added, slapping Chouns.

Both men sneezed with abandon.

"Picked it up on the other planet, I suppose," said Chouns.

"We can work up an allergy."

"Impossible." Chouns held up one of the sighters and shouted at the snake things, "Do you have any of these?"

FOR A WHILE, there was nothing in answer but the splashing of water, as some of the snake things slid into the river and emerged with silvery clusters of water-life, which they tucked beneath their bodies toward some hidden mouth.

But then one snake-thing, longer than the others, came thrusting along the ground, one blunt end raised questingly some two inches, weaving blindly side to side. The bulb in its center swelled gently at first, then alarmingly, splitting in two with an audible pop. There, nestling within the two halves were two more sighters, the duplicates of the first two.

Chouns said ecstatically, "Lord in Heaven, isn't that beautiful?"

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He stepped hastily forward, reaching out for the objects. The swelling that held them thinned and lengthened, forming what were almost tentacles. They reached out toward him.

Chouns was laughing. They were Gamow sighters all right; duplicates, absolute duplicates, of the first two. Chouns fondled them.

Smith was shouting, "Don't you hear me? Chouns, damn it, listen to me."

Chouns said, "What?" He was dimly aware that Smith had been yelling at him for over a minute.

"Look at the flowers, Chouns."

They were closing, as had those on the other planet, and among the rows, the snake-things roared upwards, balancing on one end and swaying with a queer, broken rhythm. Only the blunt ends of them were visible above the pale pink.

Smith said, "You can't say they're closing up because of nightfall. It's broad day."

Chouns shrugged. "Different planet, different plant. Come on! We've only got two sighters here; there must be more."

"Chouns, let's go home." Smith firmed his legs into two stubborn pillars and the grip he held on Chouns' collar tightened.

Chouns' reddened face turned back toward him indignantly. "What are you doing?"

"I'm getting ready to knock you out if you don't come back with me at once, into the ship, and no nonsense."

For a moment, Chouns stood irresolute; then a certain wildness about him faded, a certain slackening took place, and he said, "All right."

THEY WERE half out the star cluster. Smith said, "How are you?"

Chouns sat up in his bunk and rumpled his hair. "Normal, I guess; sane again. How long have I been sleeping?"

"Twelve hours."

"What about you?"

"I've catnapped." Smith turned ostentatiously to the instruments and made some minor adjustments. He said, self-consciously, "Do you know what happened back there on those planets?"

Chouns said slowly, "Do you?"

"I think so."

"Oh? May I hear?"

Smith said, "It was the same plant on both planets. You'll grant that?"

"I most certainly do."

"IT WAS transplanted from one planet to the other, somehow. It grows on both planets perfectly well; but occasionally —to maintain vigor, I imagine— there must be cross-fertilization, the two strains mingling. That

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sort of thing happens on Earth often enough."

"Cross-fertilization for vigor? Yes."

"But *we* were the agents that arranged for the mingling. We landed on one planet and were coated with pollen. Remember the blooms closing? That must have been just after they released their pollen; and that's what was making us sneeze, too. Then we landed on the other planet and knocked the pollen off our clothes. A new hybrid strain will start up. We were just a pair of two-legged bees, Chouns, doing our duty by the flowers."

Chouns smiled tentatively, "An inglorious role, in a way."

"Hell, that's not it. Don't you see the danger? Don't you see why we have to get back home *fast?*"

"Why?"

"Because organisms don't adapt themselves to nothing. Those plants seem to be adapted to interplanetary fertilization. We even got paid off, the way bees' are; not with nectar, but with Gamow sighters."

"Well?"

"Well, you can't have interplanetary fertilization unless something or someone is there to do the job. *We* did it this time, but we were the first humans ever to enter the cluster. So before this, it must be non-humans who did it; maybe the same non-humans who transplanted the blooms in the first place. That means that somewhere in this cluster there is an intelligent race of beings; intelligent enough for space-travel. And Earth must know about that."

Slowly, Chouns shook his head.

Smith frowned. "You find flaws somewhere in the reasoning?"

Chouns put his head between his own palms and looked miserable. "Let's say you've missed almost everything."

"WHAT HAVE I missed?" demanded Smith, angrily.

"Your cross-fertilization theory is good, as far as it goes, but you haven't considered a few points. When we approached that stellar system, our hyperatomic motor went out of order in a way the automatic controls could neither diagnose nor correct. After we landed, we made no effort to adjust them. We forgot about them, in fact; and when you handled them later you found they were in perfect order, and were so unimpressed by that, that you didn't even mention it to me for another few hours.

"Take something else: How conveniently we chose landing spots near a grouping of animal life on both planets. Just luck? And our incredible confidence in the good will of the creatures. We never even bothered check-

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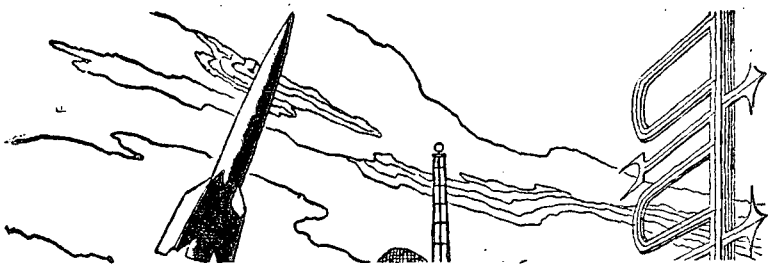

ing atmospheres for trace poisons before exposing ourselves.

"And what bothers me most of all is that I went completely crazy over the Gamow sighters? Why? They're valuable, yes, but not *that* valuable—and I don't generally go overboard for a quick buck."

Smith had kept an uneasy silence during all that. Now he said, "I don't see that any of that adds up to anything."

"Get off it, Smith; you know better than that. Isn't it obvious to you that we were under mental control from the outside?"

Smith's mouth twisted and caught halfway between derision and doubt. "Are you on the psionic kick again?"

"Yes; facts are facts. I told you that my hunches might be a form of rudimentary telepathy."

"Is that a fact, too? You didn't think so a couple of days ago."

"I think so, now. Look, I'm a better receiver than you, and I was more strongly affected. Now that it's over, I understand more about what happened because I received more. Understand?"

"No," said Smith, harshly.

"Then listen further. You said yourself the Gamow sighters were the nectar that bribed us into pollination. *You* said that."

"All right."

"WELL, THEN, where did they come from? They were Earth products; we even read the manufacturer's name and model on them, letter by letter. Yet, if no human beings have ever been in the cluster, where did the sighters come from? Neither one of us worried about that, then; and you don't seem to worry about it even now."

"Well—"

"What did you do with the sighters after we got on board ship, Smith? You took them from me; I remember that."

"I put them in the safe," said Smith, defensively.

"Have you touched them since?"

"No."

"Have I?"

"Not as far as I know."

"You have my word I didn't. Then why not open the safe now?"

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Smith stepped slowly to the safe. It was keyed to his fingerprints, and it opened. Without looking, he reached in. His expression altered and with a sharp cry, he first stared at the contents then scrabbled them out.

He held four rocks of assorted color, each of them roughly rectangular.

"THEY USED our own emotions to drive us," said Chouns, softly, as though insinuating the words into the other's stubborn skull one at a time. "They made us think the hyperatomics were wrong so we could land on one of the planets; it didn't matter which, I suppose. They made us think we had precision instruments in our hand after we landed on one so we would race to the other."

"Who are they?" groaned Smith. "The tails or the snakes? Or both?"

"Neither," said Chouns. "It was the plants."

"The plants? The *flowers?*"

"Certainly. We saw two different sets of animals tending the same species of plant. Being animals ourselves, we assumed the animals were the masters. But why should we assume that? It was the plants that were being taken care of."

"We cultivate plants on Earth, too, Chouns."

"But we eat those plants," said Chouns.

"And maybe those creatures eat their plants, too."

"Let's say I know they don't," said Chouns. "They maneuvered us well, enough. Remember how careful I was to find a bare spot on which to land."

"*I* felt no such urge."

"You weren't at the controls; they weren't worried about you. Then, too, remember that we never noticed the pollen, though we were covered with it—not till we were safely on the second planet. Then we dusted the pollen off, on order."

"I never heard anything so impossible."

"Why is it impossible? We don't associate intelligence with plants, because plants have no nervous systems; but these might have. Remember the fleshy buds on the stems? Also, plants aren't free-moving; but they don't have to be if they develop psionic powers and can make use of free-moving animals. They get cared for, fertilized, irrigated, pollinated, and so on. The animals tend them with single-minded devotion and are happy over it because the plants make them feel happy."

"I'm sorry for you," said Smith, in a monotone. "If you try to tell this story back on Earth, I'm sorry for you."

"I have no illusions," muttered Chouns, "yet—what can I do but try to warn Earth. You see what they do to animals."

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"They make slaves of them according to you."

"WORSE THAN that. Either the tailed creatures, or the snake things, or both, must have been civilized enough to have developed space-travel once; otherwise, the plants couldn't be on both plants. But once the plants developed psionic powers (a mutant strain perhaps) that came to an end. Animals at the atomic stage are dangerous. So they were made to forget; they were reduced to what they are. — Damn it, Smith, those plants are the most dangerous things in the Universe. Earth must be informed about them, because some day Earthmen may be entering that cluster."

Smith laughed. "You know, you're completely off-base. If those plants really had us under control, why would they let us get away to warn the others?"

Chouns paused. "I don't know."

Smith's good humor was restored. He said, "For a minute, you had me going, I don't mind telling you."

Chouns rubbed his skull violently. Why *were* they let go. And for that matter, why did he feel this horrible urgency to warn Earth about a matter with which Earthmen would not come into contact for millennia perhaps.

He thought desperately and something came glimmering. He fumbled for it, but it drifted away. For a moment, he thought desperately that it was as though the thought had been *pushed* away; but then that feeling, too, left.

He knew only that the ship had to remain at full thrust; that they had to hurry.

SO, AFTER uncounted years, the proper conditions had come about again. The protospores from two planetary strains of the mother plant met and mingled, sifting together into the clothes and hair and ship of the new animals. Almost at once, the hybrid spores formed; the hybrid spores that alone had all the capacity and potentiality of adapting themselves to a new planet.

The spores waited quietly, now, on the ship which, with the last impulse of the mother plant upon the minds of the creatures aboard, was hurtling them at top thrust toward a new and ripe world where free-moving creatures would tend their needs.

The spores waited with the patience of the plant (the all-conquering patience no animal can ever know) for their arrival on a new world—each, in its own tiny way, an explorer—

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Just as medicine is not a science, but rather an art—a device, practised in a scientific manner, in its best manifestations—time-travel stories are not science fiction. Time-travel, however, has become acceptable to science fiction readers as a traditional device in stories than are otherwise admissible in the genre. Here, Frederik Pohl employs it to portray the amusingly catastrophic meeting of three societies.

THE DAY OF THE BOOMER DUKES

by Frederik Pohl

Illustrated by EMSH

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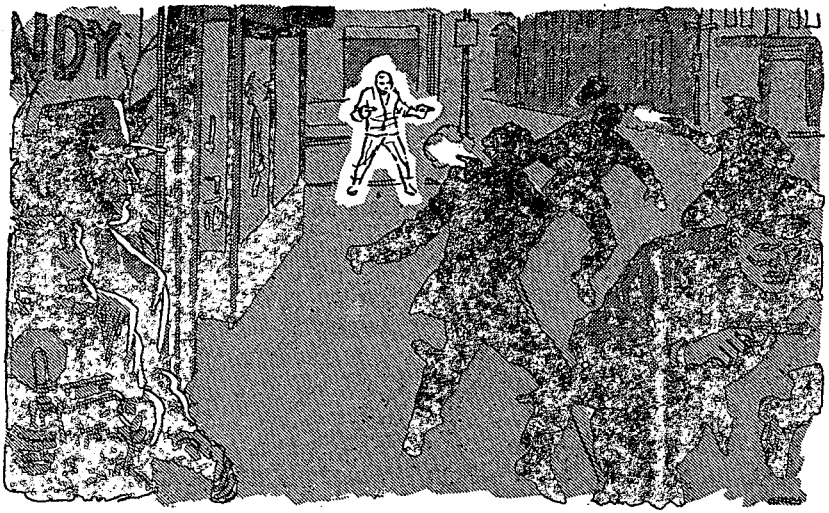

There was a silvery aura around the kid . . . the cops' guns hit him . . . but he didn't notice. . . .

I

Foraminifera 9

PAPTASTE UDDERLY, semped sempsemp dezhavoo, qued schmerz — Excuse me. I mean to say that it was like an endless diet of days, boring, tedious. . . .

No, it loses too much in the translation. Explete my reasons, I say. Do my reasons matter? No, not to you, for you are troglodytes, knowing nothing of causes, understanding only acts. Acts and facts, I will give you acts and facts.

First you must know how I am called. My "name" is Foraminifera 9-Hart Bailey's Beam, and I am of adequate age and size. (If you doubt this, I am prepared to fight.) Once the — the tediety of life, as you might say, had made itself clear to me, there were, of course, only two alternatives. I do not like to die, so that possibility was out; and the remaining alternative was flight.

Naturally, the necessary machinery was available to me. I arrogated a small viewing machine, and scanned the centuries of the past in the hope that a sanctuary might reveal itself to my aching eyes. Kwel tediety that was! Back, back I went through the ages. Back to the Century of the Dog, back to the Age of the Crippled Men. I

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found no time better than my own. Back and back I peered, back as far as the Numbered Years. The Twenty-Eighth Century was boredom unendurable, the Twenty-Sixth a morass of dullness. Twenty-Fifth, Twenty-Fourth — wherever I looked, tediety was what I found.

I SNAPPED off the machine and considered. Put the problem thus: Was there in all of the pages of history no age in which a 9-Hart Bailey's Beam might find adventure and excitement? There had to be! It was not possible, I told myself, despairing, that from the dawn of the dreaming primates until my own time there was no era at all in which I could be — happy? Yes, I suppose happiness is what I was looking for. But where was it? In my viewer, I had fifty centuries or more to look back upon. And that was, I decreed, the trouble; I could spend my life staring into the viewer, and yet never discover the time that was right for me. There were simply too many eras to choose from. It was like an enormous library in which there must, there had to be, contained the one fact I was looking for — that, lacking an index, I might wear my life away and never find.

"Index!"

I said the word aloud! For, to be sure, it was the answer. I had the freedom of the Learning Lodge, and the index in the reading room could easily find for me just what I wanted.

Splendid, splendid! I almost felt cheerful. I quickly returned the viewer I had been using to the keeper, and received my deposit back. I hurried to the Learning Lodge and fed my specifications into the index, as follows, that is to say: Find me a time in recent past where there is adventure and excitement, where there is a secret, colorful band of desperadoes with whom I can ally myself. I then added two specifications — second, that it should be before the time of the high radiation levels; and first, that it should be after the discovery of anesthesia, in case of accident — and retired to a desk in the reading room to await results.

It took only a few moments, which I occupied in making a list of the gear I wished to take with me. Then there was a hiss and a crackle, and in the receiver of the desk a book appeared. I unzipped the case, took it out, and opened it to the pages marked on the attached reading tape.

I had found my wonderland of adventure!

AH, HOURS and days of exciting preparation! What a round of packing and buying; what a filling out of forms and a stamping of visas; what an orgy

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of injections and inoculations and preventive therapy! Merely getting ready for the trip made my pulse race faster and my adrenalin balance rise to the very point of paranoia; it was like being given a true blue new chance to live.

At last I was ready. I stepped into the transmission capsule; set the dials; unlocked the door, stepped out; collapsed the capsule and stored it away in my carry-all; and looked about at my new home.

Pyew! Kwel smell of staleness, of sourness, above all of coldness! It was a close matter then if I would be able to keep from a violent eructative stenosis, as you say. I closed my eyes and remembered warm violets for a moment, and then it was all right.

The coldness was not merely a smell; it was a physical fact. There was a damp grayish substance underfoot which I recognized as snow; and in a hard-surfaced roadway there were a number of wheeled vehicles moving, which caused the liquefying snow to splash about me. I adjusted my coat controls for warmth and deflection, but that was the best I could do. The reek of stale decay remained. Then there were also the buildings, painfully almost vertical. I believe it would not have disturbed me if they had been truly vertical; but many of them were minutes of arc from a true perpendicular, all of them covered with a carbonaceous material which I instantly perceived was an inadvertent deposit from the air. It was a bad beginning!

However, I was not *bored*.

I MADE my way down the "street," as you say, toward where a group of young men were walking toward me, five abreast. As I came near, they looked at me with interest and kwell respect, conversing with each other in whispers.

I addressed them: "Sirs, please direct me to the nearest recruiting office, as you call it, for the dread Camorra."

They stopped and pressed about me, looking at me intently. They were handsomely, though crudely dressed in coats of a striking orange color, and long trousers of an extremely dark material.

I decreed that I might not have made them understand me — it is always probable, it is understood, that a quicknik course in dialects of the past may not give one instant command of spoken communication in the field. I spoke again: "I wish to encounter a representative of the Camorra, in other words the Black Hand, in other words the cruel and sinister Sicilian terrorists named the Mafia. Do you know where these can be found?"

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One of them said, "Nay. What's that jive?"

I puzzled over what he had said for a moment, but in the end decreed that his message was sensefree. As I was about to speak, however, he said suddenly: "Let's rove, man." And all five of them walked quickly away a few "yards." It was quite disappointing. I observed them conferring among themselves, glancing at me, and for a time proposed terminating my venture, for I then believed that it would be better to return "home," as you say, in order to more adequately research the matter.

HOWEVER, the five young men came toward me again. The one who had spoken before, who I now detected was somewhat taller and fatter than the others, spoke as follows: "You're wanting the Mafia?" I agreed. He looked at me for a moment. "Are you holding?"

He was inordinately hard to understand. I said, slowly and with patience, "Keska that 'holding' say?"

"Money, man. You going to slip us something to help you find these cats?"

"Certainly, money. I have a great quantity of money instantly available," I rejoined him. This appeared to relieve his mind.

There was a short pause, directly after which this first of the young men spoke: "You're on, man. Yeah, come with us. What's to call you?" I queried this last statement, and he expanded: "The name. What's the name?"

"You may call me Foraminifera 9," I directed, since I wished to be incognito, as you put it, and we proceeded along the "street." All five of the young men indicated a desire to serve me, offering indeed to take my carry-all. I rejected this, politely.

I looked about me with lively interest, as you may well believe. Kwel dirt, kwel dinginess, kwel cold! And yet there was a certain charm which I can determine no way of expressing in this language. Acts and facts, of course. I shall not attempt to capture the subjectivity which is the charm, only to transcribe the physical datum — perhaps even data, who knows? My companions, for example: They were in appearance overwrought, looking about them continually, stopping entirely and drawing me with them into the shelter of a "door" when another man, this one wearing blue clothing and a visored hat appeared. Yet they were clearly devoted to me, at that moment, since they had put aside their own projects in order to escort me without delay to the Mafia.

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MAFIA! Fortunate that I had found them to lead me to the Mafia! For it had been clear in the historical work I had consulted that it was not ultimately easy to gain access to the Mafia. Indeed, so secret were they that I had detected no trace of their existence in other histories of the period. Had I relied only on the conventional work, I might never have known of their great underground struggle against what you term society. It was only in the actual contemporary volume itself, the curiosity titled *U.S.A. Confidential* by one Lait and one Mortimer, that I had descried that, throughout the world, this great revolutionary organization flexed its tentacles, the plexus within a short distance of where I now stood, battling courageously. With me to help them, what heights might we not attain! Kwel dramatic delight!

My meditations were interrupted. "Boomers!" asserted one of my five escorts in a loud, frightened tone. "Let's cut, man!" he continued, leading me with them into another entrance. It appeared, as well as I could decree, that the cause of his ejaculative outcry was the discovery of perhaps three, perhaps four, other young men, in coats of the same shiny material as my escorts. The difference was that they were of a different color, being blue.

WE HASTENED along a lengthy chamber which was quite dark, immediately after which the large, heavy one opened a way to a serrated incline leading downward. It was extremely dark, I should say. There was also an extreme smell, quite like that of the outer air, but enormously intensified; one would suspect that there was an incomplete combustion of, perhaps, wood or coal, as well as a certain quantity of general decay. At any rate, we reached the bottom of the incline, and my escort behaved quite badly. One of them said to the other four, in these words: "Them jumpers follow us sure. Yeah, there's much trouble. What's to prime this guy now and split?"

Instantly they fell upon me with violence. I had fortunately become rather alarmed at their visible emotion of fear, and already had taken from my carryall a Stollgratz 16, so that I quickly turned it on them. I started to replace the Stollgratz 16 as they fell to the floor, yet I realized that there might be an additional element of danger. Instead of putting the Stollgratz 16 in with the other trade goods, which I had brought to assist me in negotiating with the Mafia, I transferred it to my jacket. It had become clear to me that the five young men of my escort had intended to abduct and rob me — indeed had intended it all along,

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perhaps having never intended to convoy me to the office of the Mafia. And the other young men, those who wore the blue jackets in place of the orange, were already descending the incline toward me, quite rapidly.

"Stop," I directed them. "I shall not entrust myself to you until you have given me evidence that you entirely deserve such trust."

THEY ALL halted, regarding me and the Stollgratz 16. I detected that one of them said to another: "That cat's got a zip."

The other denied this, saying: "That no zip, man. Yeah, look at them Leopards. Say, you bust them flunkies with that thing?"

I perceived his meaning quite quickly. "You are 'correct'," I rejoined. "Are you associated in friendship with them flunkies?"

"Hell, no. Yeah, they're Leopards and we're Boomer Dukes. You cool them, you do us much good." I received this information as indicating that the two socio-economic units were inimical, and unfortunately lapsed into an example of the Bivalent Error. Since p implied not-q, I sloppily assumed that not-q implied r (with, you understand, r being taken as the class of phenomena pertinently favorable to me). This was a very poor construction, and of course resulted in certain difficulties. Qued, after all. I stated:

"Them flunkies offered to conduct me to a recruiting office, as you say, of the Mafia, but instead tried to take from me the much money I am holding." I then went on to describe to them my desire to attain contact with the said Mafia; meanwhile they descended further and grouped about me in the very little light, examining curiously the motionless figures of the Leopards.

They seemed to be greatly impressed; and at the same time, very much puzzled. Naturally. They looked at the Leopards, and then at me.

They gave every evidence of wishing to help me; but of course if I had not forgotten that one cannot assume from the statements "not-Leopard implies Boomer Duke" and "not-Leopard implies Foraminifera 9" that, qued, "Boomer Duke implies Foraminifera 9" . . . if I had not forgotten this, I say, I should not have been "deceived." For in practice they were as little favorable to me as the Leopards. A certain member of their party reached a position behind me.

I quickly perceived that his intention was not favorable, and attempted to turn around in order to discharge at him with the Stollgratz 16, but he was very rapid. He had a metallic cylinder, and with it struck my head, knocking "me" unconscious.

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II

Shield 8805

THIS CANDY STORE is called Chris's. There must be ten thousand like it in the city. A marble counter with perhaps five stools, a display case of cigars and a bigger one of candy, a few dozen girlie magazines hanging by clothespin-sort-of things from wire ropes along the wall. It has a couple of very small glass-topped tables under the magazines. And a juke — I can't imagine a place like Chris's without a juke.

I had been sitting around Chris's for a couple of hours, and I was beginning to get edgy. The reason I was sitting around Chris's was not that I liked Cokes particularly, but that it was one of the hanging-out places of a juvenile gang called The Leopards, with whom I had been trying to work for nearly a year; and the reason I was becoming edgy was that I didn't see any of them there.

The boy behind the counter — he had the same first name as I, Walter in both cases, though my last name is Hutner and his is, I believe, something Puerto Rican — the boy behind the counter was dummying up, too. I tried to talk to him, on and off, when he wasn't busy. He wasn't busy most of the time; it was too cold for sodas. But he just didn't want to talk. Now, these kids love to talk. A lot of what they say doesn't make sense — either bullying, or bragging, or purposeless swearing — but talk is their normal state; when they quiet down it means trouble. For instance, if you ever find yourself walking down Thirty-fifth Street and a couple of kids pass you, talking, you don't have to bother looking around; but if they stop talking, turn quickly. You're about to be mugged. Not that Walt was a mugger — as far as I know; but that's the pattern of the enclave.

SO HIS being quiet was a bad sign. It might mean that a rumble was brewing — and that meant that my work so far had been pretty nearly a failure. Even worse, it might mean that somehow the Leopards had discovered that I had at last passed my examinations and been appointed to the New York City Police Force as a rookie patrolman, Shield 8805.

Trying to work with these kids is hard enough at best. They don't like outsiders. But they particularly hate cops, and I had been trying for some weeks to decide how I could break the news to them.

The door opened. Hawk stood there. He didn't look at me, which was a bad sign. Hawk was one of the youngest in the Leopards, a skinny, very dark kid

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who had been reasonably friendly to me. He stood in the open door, with snow blowing in past him. "Walt. Out here, man."

It wasn't me he meant — they call me "Champ," I suppose because I beat them all shooting eight-ball pool. Walt put down the comic he had been reading and walked out, also without looking at me. They closed the door.

TIME PASSED. I saw them through the window, talking to each other, looking at me. It was something, all right. They were scared. That's bad, because these kids are like wild animals; if you scare them, they hit first — it's the only way they know to defend themselves. But on the other hand, a rumble wouldn't scare them — not where they would show it; and finding out about the shield in my pocket wouldn't scare them, either. They hated cops, as I say; but cops were a part of their environment. It was strange, and baffling.

Walt came back in, and Hawk walked rapidly away. Walt went behind the counter, lit a cigaret, wiped at the marble top, picked up his comic, put it down again and finally looked at me. He said: "Some punk busted Fayo and a couple of the boys. It's real trouble."

I didn't say anything.

He took a puff on his cigaret. "They're chilled, Champ. Five of them."

"Chilled? Dead?" It sounded bad; there hadn't been a real rumble in months, not with a killing.

He shook his head. "Not dead. You're wanting to see, you go down Gomez's cellar. Yeah, they're all stiff but they're breathing. I be along soon as the old man comes back in the store."

He looked pretty sick. I left it at that and hurried down the block to the tenement where the Gomez family lived, and then I found out why.

THEY WERE sprawled on the filthy floor of the cellar like winoes in an alley. Fayo, who ran the gang; Jap; Baker; two others I didn't know as well. They were breathing, as Walt had said, but you just couldn't wake them up.

Hawk and his twin brother, Yogi, were there with them, looking scared. I couldn't blame them. The kids looked perfectly all right, but it was obvious that they weren't. I bent down and smelled, but there was no trace of liquor or anything else on their breath.

I stood up. "We'd better get a doctor."

"Nay. You call the meat wagon, and a cop comes right with it, man," Yogi said, and his brother nodded.

I laid off that for a moment. "What happened?"

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Hawk said, "You know that witch Gloria, goes with one of the Boomer Dukes? She opened her big mouth to my girl. Yeah, opened her mouth and much bad talk came out. Said Fayo primed some jumper with a zip and the punk cooled him, and then a couple of the Boomers moved in real cool. Now they got the punk with the zip and much other stuff, real stuff."

"What kind of stuff?"

Hawk looked worried. He finally admitted that he didn't know what kind of stuff, but it was something dangerous in the way of weapons. It had been the "zip" that had knocked out the five Leopards.

I sent Hawk out to the drugstore for smelling salts and containers of hot black coffee — not that I knew what I was doing, of course, but they were dead set against calling an ambulance. And the boys didn't seem to be in any particular danger, only sleep.

HOWEVER, even then I knew that this kind of trouble was something I couldn't handle alone. It was a tossup what to do — the smart thing was to call the precinct right then and there; but I couldn't help feeling that that would make the Leopards clam up hopelessly. The six months I had spent trying to work with them had not been too successful — a lot of the other neighborhood workers had made a lot more progress than I — but at least they were willing to talk to me; and they wouldn't talk to uniformed police.

Besides, as soon as I had been sworn in, the day before, I had begun the practice of carrying my .38 at all times, as the regulations say. It was in my coat. There was no reason for me to feel I needed it. But I did. If there was any truth to the story of a "zip" knocking out the boys — and I had all five of them right there for evidence — I had the unpleasant conviction that there was real trouble circulating around East Harlem that afternoon.

"Champ. They all waking up!"

I turned around, and Hawk was right. The five Leopards, all of a sudden, were stirring and opening their eyes. Maybe the smelling salts had something to do with it, but I rather think not.

We fed them some of the black coffee, still reasonably hot. They were scared; they were more scared than anything I had ever seen in those kids before. They could hardly talk at first, and when finally they came around enough to tell me what had happened I could hardly believe them. This man had been small and peculiar, and he had been looking for, of all things, the "Mafia," which he had read

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about in history books — *old* history books.

Well, it didn't make sense, unless you were prepared to make a certain assumption that I refused to make. Man from Mars? Nonsense. Or from the future? Equally ridiculous. . . .

THEN THE five Leopards, reviving, began to walk around. The cellar was dark and dirty, and packed with the accumulation of generations in the way of old furniture and rat-inhabited mattresses and piles of newspapers; it wasn't surprising that we hadn't noticed the little gleaming thing that had apparently rolled under an abandoned potbelly stove.

Jap picked it up, squalled, dropped it and yelled for me.

I touched it cautiously, and it tingled. It wasn't painful, but it was an odd, unexpected feeling — perhaps you've come across the "buzzers" that novelty stores sell which, concealed in the palm, give a sudden, surprising tingle when the owner shakes hands with an unsuspecting friend. It was like that, like a mild electric shock. I picked it up and held it. It gleamed brightly, with a light of its own; it was round; it made a faint droning sound; I turned it over, and it spoke to me. It said in a friendly, feminine whisper: *Warning, this portatron attuned only to Bailey's Beam percepts. Remain quiescent until the Adjuster comes.*

That settled it. Any time a lit-up cue ball talks to me, I refer the matter to higher authority. I decided on the spot that I was heading for the precinct house, no matter what the Leopards thought.

But when I turned and headed for the stairs, I couldn't move. My feet simply would not lift off the ground. I twisted, and stumbled, and fell in a heap; I yelled for help, but it didn't do any good. The Leopards couldn't move either.

We were stuck there in Gomez's cellar, as though we had been nailed to the filthy floor.

III

Cow

WHEN I SEE what this flunky has done to them Leopards, I call him a cool cat right away. But then we jump him and he ain't so cool. Angel and Tiny grab him under the arms and I'm grabbing the stuff he's carrying. Yeah, we get out of there.

There's bulls on the street, so we cut through the back and over the fences. Tiny don't like that. He tells me, "Cow. What's to leave this cat here? He must weigh eighteen tons." "You're bringing him," I tell him, so he shuts up. That's how it is in the

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Boomer Dukes. When Cow talks, them other flunkies shut up fast.

We get him in the loft over the R. and I. Social Club. Damn, but it's cold up there. I can hear the pool balls clicking down below so I pass the word to keep quiet. Then I give this guy the foot and pretty soon he wakes up.

As soon as I talk to him a little bit I figure we had luck riding with us when we see them Leopards. This cat's got real bad stuff. Yeah, I never hear of anything like it. But what it takes to make a fight he's got. I take my old pistol and give it to Tiny. Hell, it makes him happy and what's it cost me? Because what this cat's got makes that pistol look like something for babies.

FIRST HE don't want to talk. "Stomp him," I tell Angel, but he's scared. He says, "Nay. This is a real weird cat, Cow. I'm for cutting out of here."

"Stomp him," I tell him again, pretty quiet, but he does it. He don't have to tell me this cat's weird, but when the cat gets the foot a couple of times he's willing to talk. Yeah, he talks real funny, but that don't matter to me. We take all the loot out of his bag, and I make this cat tell me what it's to do. Damn, I don't know what he's talking about one time out of six, but I know enough. Even Tiny catches on after a while, because I see him put down that funky old pistol I gave him that he's been loving up.

I'm feeling pretty good. I wish a couple of them chicken Leopards would turn up so I could show them what they missed out on. Yeah, I'll take on them, and the Black Dogs, and all the cops in the world all at once — that's how good I'm feeling. I feel so good that I don't even like it when Angel lets out a yell and comes up with a wad of loot. It's like I want to prime the U.S. Mint for chickenfeed, I don't want it to come so easy.

But money's on hand, so I take it off Angel and count it. This cat was really loaded; there must be a thousand dollars here.

I take a handful of it and hand it over to Angel real cool. "Get us some charge," I tell him. "There's much to do and I'm feeling ready for some charge to do it with."

"How many sticks you want me to get?" he asks, holding on to that money like he never saw any before.

I tell him: "Sticks? Nay. I'm for real stuff tonight. You find Four-Eye and get us some horse." Yeah, he digs me then. He looks like he's pretty scared and I know he is, because this punk hasn't had anything bigger than reefers in his life. But I'm for busting a couple of caps of

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H, and what I do he's going to do. He takes off to find Four-Eye and the rest of us get busy on this cat with the funny artillery until he gets back.

IT'S LIKE I'm a million miles down Dream Street. Hell, I don't want to wake up.

But the H is wearing off and I'm feeling mean. Damn, I'll stomp my mother if she talks big to me right then.

I'm the first one on my feet and I'm looking for trouble. The whole place is full now. Angel must have passed the word to everybody in the Dukes, but I don't even remember them coming in. There's eight or ten cats lying around on the floor now, not even moving. This won't do, I decide.

If I'm on my feet, they're all going to be on their feet. I start to give them the foot and they begin to move. Even the weirdie must've had some H. I'm guessing that somebody slipped him some to see what would happen, because he's off on Cloud Number Nine. Yeah, they're feeling real mean when they wake up, but I handle them cool. Even that little flunky Sailor starts to go up against me but I look at him cool and he chickens. Angel and Pete are real sick, with the shakes and the heaves, but I ain't waiting for them to feel good. "Give me that loot," I tell Tiny, and he hands over the stuff we took off the weirdie. I start to pass out the stuff.

"What's to do with this stuff?" Tiny asks me, looking at what I'm giving him.

I tell him, "Point it and shoot it." He isn't listening when the weirdie's telling me what the stuff is. He wants to know what it does, but I don't know that. I just tell him, "Point it and shoot it, man." I've sent one of the cats out for drinks and smokes and he's back by then, and we're all beginning to feel a little better, only still pretty mean. They begin to dig me.

"Yeah, it sounds like a rumble," one of them says, after a while.

I give him the nod, cool. "You're calling it," I tell him. "There's much fighting tonight. The Boomer Dukes is taking on the world!"

IV

Sandy Van Pelt

THE FRONT office thought the radio car would give us a break in spot news coverage, and I guessed as wrong as they did. I had been covering City Hall long enough, and that's no place to build a career—the Press Association is very tight there, there's not much chance of getting any kind of exclusive story because of the sharing agreements. So I put in

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for the radio car. It meant taking the night shift, but I got it.

I suppose the front office got their money's worth, because they played up every lousy auto smash the radio car covered as though it were the story of the Second Coming, and maybe it helped circulation. But I had been on it for four months and, wouldn't you know it, there wasn't a decent murder, or sewer explosion, or running gun fight between six P.M. and six A.M. any night I was on duty in those whole four months. What made it worse, the kid they gave me as photographer — Sol Detweiler, his name was — couldn't drive worth a damn, so I was stuck with chauffeuring us around.

We had just been out to La-Guardia to see if it was true that Marilyn Monroe was sneaking into town with Aly Khan on a night plane — it wasn't — and we were coming across the Triborough Bridge, heading south toward the East River Drive, when the office called. I pulled over and parked and answered the radiophone.

IT WAS Harrison, the night City Editor. "Listen, Sandy, there's a gang fight in East Harlem. Where are you now?"

It didn't sound like much to me, I admit. "There's always a gang fight in East Harlem, Harrison. I'm cold and I'm on my way down to Night Court, where there may or may not be a story; but at least I can get my feet warm."

"*Where are you now?*" Harrison wasn't fooling. I looked at Sol, on the seat next to me; I thought I had heard him snicker. He began to fiddle with his camera without looking at me. I pushed the "talk" button and told Harrison where I was. It pleased him very much; I wasn't more than six blocks from where this big rumble was going on, he told me, and he made it very clear that I was to get on over there immediately.

I pulled away from the curb, wondering why I had ever wanted to be a newspaperman; I could have made five times as much money for half as much work in an ad agency. To make it worse, I heard Sol chuckle again. The reason he was so amused was that when we first teamed up I made the mistake of telling him what a hot reporter I was, and I had been visibly cooling off before his eyes for a better than four straight months.

Believe me, I was at the very bottom of my career that night. For five cents cash I would have parked the car, thrown the keys in the East River, and taken the first bus out of town. I was absolutely positive that the story would be a bust and all I would get out of it would be a bad cold

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from walking around in the snow.

And if that doesn't show you what a hot newspaperman I really am, nothing will.

SOL BEGAN to act interested as we reached the corner Harrison had told us to go to. "That's Chris's," he said, pointing at a little candy store. "And that must be the pool hall where the Leopards hang out."

"You know this place?"

He nodded. "I know a man named Walter Hutner. He and I went to school together, until he dropped out, couple weeks ago. He quit college to go to the Police Academy. He wanted to be a cop."

I looked at him. "You're going to college?"

"Sure, Mr. Van Pelt. Wally Hutner was a sociology major — I'm journalism — but we had a couple of classes together. He had a part-time job with a neighborhood council up here, acting as a sort of adult adviser for one of the gangs."

"They need advice on how to be gangs?"

"No, that's not it, Mr. Van Pelt. The councils try to get their workers accepted enough to bring the kids in to the social centers, that's all. They try to get them off the streets. Wally was working with a bunch called the Leopards."

I shut him up. "Tell me about it later!" I stopped the car and rolled down a window, listening.

YES, THERE WAS something going on all right. Not at the corner Harrison had mentioned — there wasn't a soul in sight in any direction. But I could hear what sounded like gunfire and yelling, and, my God, even bombs going off! And it wasn't too far away. There were sirens, too — squad cars, no doubt.

"It's over that way!" Sol yelled, pointing. He looked as though he was having the time of his life, all keyed up and delighted. He didn't have to tell me where the noise was coming from, I could hear for myself. It sounded like D-Day at Normandy, and I didn't like the sound of it.

I made a quick decision and slammed on the brakes, then backed the car back the way we had come. Sol looked at me. "What —"

"Local color," I explained quickly. "This the place you were talking about? Chris's? Let's go in and see if we can find some of these hoodlums."

"But, Mr. Van Pelt, all the pictures are over where the fight's going on!"

"Pictures, shmictures! Come on!" I got out in front of the candy store, and the only thing he could do was follow me.

Whatever they were doing,

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they were making the devil's own racket about it. Now that I looked a little more closely I could see that they must have come this way; the candy store's windows were broken; every other street light was smashed; and what had at first looked like a flight of steps in front of a tenement across the street wasn't anything of the kind — it was a pile of bricks and stone from the false-front cornice on the roof! How in the world they had managed to knock that down I had no idea; but it sort of convinced me that, after all, Harrison had been right about this being a *big* fight. Over where the noise was coming from there were queer flashing lights in the clouds overhead — reflecting exploding flares, I thought.

NO, I DIDN'T want to go over where the pictures were. I like living. If it had been a normal Harlem rumble with broken bottles and knives, or maybe even home-made zip guns — I might have taken a chance on it, but this was for real.

"Come on," I yelled to Sol, and we pushed the door open to the candy store.

At first there didn't seem to be anyone in, but after we called a couple times a kid of about sixteen, coffee-colored and scared-looking, stuck his head up above the counter.

"You. What's going on here?" I demanded. He looked at me as if I was some kind of a two-headed monster. "Come on, kid. Tell us what happened."

"Excuse me, Mr. Van Pelt." Sol cut in ahead of me and began talking to the kid in Spanish. It got a rise out of him; at least Sol got an answer. My Spanish is only a little bit better than my Swahili, so I missed what was going on, except for an occasional word. But Sol was getting it all. He reported: "He knows Walt; that's what's bothering him. He says Walt and some of the Leopards are in a basement down the street, and there's something wrong with them. I can't exactly figure out what, but —"

"The hell with them. What about *that?*"

"You mean the fight? Oh, it's a big one all right, Mr. Van Pelt. It's a gang called the Boomer Dukes. They've got hold of some real guns somewhere — I can't exactly understand what kind of guns he means, but it sounds like something serious. He says they shot that parapet down across the street. Gosh, Mr. Van Pelt, you'd think it'd take a cannon for something like that. But it has something to do with Walt Hutner and all the Leopards, too."

I said enthusiastically, "Very good, Sol. That's fine. Find out where the cellar is, and we'll go interview Hutner."

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"But Mr. Van Pelt, the pictures —"

"Sorry. I have to call the office." I turned my back on him and headed for the car.

THE NOISE was louder, and the flashes in the sky brighter — it looked as though they were moving this way. Well, I didn't have any money tied up in the car, so I wasn't worried about leaving it in the street. And somebody's cellar seemed like a very good place to be. I called the office and started to tell Harrison what we'd found out; but he stopped me short. "Sandy, where've you been? I've been trying to call you for — Listen, we got a call from Fordham. They've detected radiation coming from the East Side — it's got to be what's going on up there! Radiation, do you hear me? That means atomic weapons! Now, you get th—"

Silence.

"Hello?" I cried, and then remembered to push the talk button. "Hello? Harrison, you there?"

Silence. The two-way radio was dead.

I got out of the car; and maybe I understood what had happened to the radio and maybe I didn't. Anyway, there was something new shining in the sky. It hung below the clouds in parts, and I could see it through the bottom of the clouds in the middle; it was a silvery teacup upside down, a hemisphere over everything.

It hadn't been there two minutes before.

I HEARD FIRING coming closer and closer. Around a corner a bunch of cops came, running, turning, firing; running, turning and firing again. It was like the retreat from Caporetto in miniature. And what was chasing them? In a minute I saw. Coming around the corner was a kid with a lightning-blue satin jacket and two funny-looking guns in his hand; there was a silvery aura around him, the same color as the lights in the sky; and I swear I saw those cops' guns hit him twenty times in twenty seconds, but he didn't seem to notice.

Sol and the kid from the candy store were right beside me. We took another look at the one-man army that was coming down the street toward us, laughing and prancing and firing those odd-looking guns. And then the three of us got out of there, heading for the cellar. Any cellar.

V

Priam's Maw

MY OCCUPATION was "short-order cook", as it is called. I practiced it in a locus entitled "The White

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Heaven," established at Fifth Avenue, Newyork, between 1949 and 1962 C.E. I had created rapport with several of the aboriginals, who addressed me as Bessie, and presumed to approve the manner in which I heated specimens of minced ruminant quadruped flesh (deceased to be sure). It was a satisfactory guise, although tiring.

Using approved techniques, I was compiling anthropometric data while "I" was, as they say, "brewing coffee." I deem the probability nearly conclusive that it was the double duty, plus the datum that, as stated, "I" was physically tired, which caused me to overlook the first signal from my portatron. Indeed, I might have overlooked the second as well except that the aboriginal named Lester stated: "Hey, Bessie. Ya got an alarm clock in ya pocketbook?" He had related the annunciator signal of the portatron to the only significant datum in his own experience which it resembled, the ringing of a bell.

I annotated his dossier to provide for his removal in case it eventuated that he had made an undesirable intuit (this proved unnecessary) and retired to the back of the "store" with my carry-all. On identifying myself to the portatron, I received information that it was attuned to a Bailey's Beam, identified as Foraminifera 9-Hart, who had refused treatment for systemic weltschmerz and instead sought to relieve his boredom by adventuring into this era.

I thereupon compiled two recommendations which are attached: 2, a proposal for reprimand to the Keeper of the Learning Lodge for failure to properly annotate a volume entitled *U.S.A., Confidential* and, 1, a proposal for reprimand to the Transport Executive, for permitting Bailey's Beam-class personnel access to temporal transport. Meanwhile, I left the "stone" by a rear exit and directed myself toward the locus of the transmitting portatron.

I HAD proximately left when I received an additional infor-

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mation, namely that developed weapons were being employed in the area toward which I was directing. This provoked that I abandon guise entirely. I went transparent and quickly examined all aboriginals within view, to determine if any required removal; but none had observed this. I rose to perhaps seventy-five meters and sped at full atmospheric driving speed toward the source of the alarm. As I crossed a "park" I detected the drive of another Adjuster, whom I determined to be Alephplex Priam's Maw — that is, my father. He bespoke me as follows: "Hurry, Besplex Priam's Maw. That crazy Foraminifera has been captured by aboriginals and they have taken his weapons away from him." "Weapons?" I inquired. "Yes, weapons," he stated, "for Foraminifera 9-Hart brought with him more than forty-three kilograms of weapons, ranging up to and including electronic."

I recorded this datum and we landed, went opaque in the shelter of a doorway and examined our percepts. "Quarantine?" asked my father, and I had to agree. "Quarantine," I voted, and he opened his carry-all and set-up a quarantine shield on the console. At once appeared the silvery quarantine dome, and the first step of our adjustment was completed. Now to isolate, remove, replace.

Queried Alephplex: "An Adjuster?" I observed the phenomenon to which he was referring. A young, dark oboriginal was coming toward us on the "street," driving a group of police aboriginals before him. He was armed, it appeared, with a fission-throwing weapon in one hand and some sort of tranquilizer — I deem it to have been a Stollgratz 16 — in the other; moreover, he wore an invulnerability belt. The police aboriginals were attempting to strike him with missile weapons, which the belt deflected. I neutralized his shield, collapsed him and stored him in my carry-all. "Not an Adjuster," I asserted my father, but he had already perceived that this was so. I left him to neutralize and collapse the police aboriginals while I zeroed in on the portatron. I did not envy him his job with the police aboriginals, for many of them were "dead," as they say. It required the most delicate adjustments.

THE PORTATRON developed to be in a "cellar" and with it were some nine or eleven aboriginals which it had immobilized pending my arrival. One spoke to me thus: "Young lady, please call the cops! We're stuck here, and —" I did not wait to hear what he wished to say further, but neutralized and collapsed him with the other aboriginals. The portatron apol-

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ogized for having caused me inconvenience; but of course it was not its fault, so I did not neutralize it. Using it for d-f, I quickly located the culprit, Foraminifera 9-Hart Bailey's Beam, nearby. He spoke despairingly in the dialect of the locus, "Besplex Priam's Maw, for God's sake get me out of this!" "Out!" I spoke to him, "you'll wish you never were 'born,' as they say!" I neutralized but did not collapse him, pending instructions from the Central Authority. The aboriginals who were with him, however, I did collapse.

Presently arrived Alephplex, along with four other Adjusters who had arrived before the quarantine shield made it not possible for anyone else to enter the disturbed area. Each one of us had had to abandon guise, so that this locus of Newyork 1939-1986 must require new Adjusters to replace us — a matter to be charged against the guilt of Foraminifera 9-Hart Bailey's Beam, I deem.

THIS CONCLUDED Steps 3 and 2 of our Adjustment, the removal and the isolation of the disturbed specimens. We are transmitting same disturbed specimens to you under separate cover herewith, in neutralized and collapsed state, for the manufacture of simulacra thereof. One regrets to say that they number three thousand eight hundred forty-six, comprising all aboriginals within the quarantined area who had first-hand knowledge of the anachronisms caused by Foraminifera's importation of contemporary weapons into this locus.

Alephplex and the four other Adjusters are at present reconstructing such physical damage as was caused by the use of said weapons. Simultaneously, while I am preparing this report, "I" am maintaining the quarantine shield which cuts off this locus, both physically and temporally, from the remainder of its environment. I deem that if replacements for the attached aboriginals can be fabricated quickly enough, there will be no significant outside percept of the shield itself, or of the happenings within it — that is, by maintaining a quasi-stasis of time while the repairs are being made, an outside aboriginal observer will see, at most, a mere flicker of silver in the sky. All Adjusters here present are working as rapidly as we can to make sure the shield can be withdrawn, before so many aboriginals have observed it as to make it necessary to replace the entire city with simulacra. We do not wish a repetition of the California incident, after all.

★

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Just about a year ago, two enthusiastic young men came to see me, and during the course of the visit announced that they were starting a campaign to make their living in science fiction—and also to become "names" in the best science fiction magazines. They planned to collaborate on some material, and write on their own as well, intending to make the grade both ways.

One of the pair was a well-known science fiction fan, who had appeared once or twice in the "pro mags," as fans designate journals like this one. The other was Randall Garrett, who had previously sold a respectable number of stories to various magazines in the science fiction and fantasy field.

I shall not try to insult your intelligence by stating that I told them I knew they could do it; on the contrary, I larded doubt with sympathy. However, this story, and Robert A. Madle's "Inside Science Fiction" will show how wrong I was!

SUITE MENTALE

by Randall Garrett

Illustrated by EMSH

OVERTURE — ADAGIO MISTERIOSO

THE NEUROSURGEON peeled the thin surgical gloves from his hands as the nurse blotted the perspiration from his forehead for the last time after the long, grueling hours.

"They're waiting outside for you, Doctor," she said quietly.

The neurosurgeon nodded wordlessly. Behind him, three assistants were still finishing up the operation, attending to the little finishing touches that did not require the brilliant hand of the specialist. Such things as suturing up a scalp, and applying bandages.

The nurse took the sterile mask — no longer sterile now — while the doctor washed and dried his hands.

"Where are they?" he asked

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finally. "Out in the hall, I suppose?"

She nodded. "You'll probably have to push them out of the way to get out of Surgery."

HER PREDICTION was almost perfect. The group of men in conservative business suits, wearing conservative ties, and holding conservative, soft, felt hats in their hands were standing just outside the door. Dr. Mallon glanced at the five of them, letting his eyes stop on the face of the tallest. "He may live," the doctor said briefly.

"You don't sound very optimistic, Dr. Mallon," said the FBI man.

Mallon shook his head. "Frankly, I'm not. He was shot laterally, just above the right temple, with what looks to me like a .357 magnum pistol slug. It's in there —" He gestured back toward the room he had just left. "— you can have it, if you want. It passed completely through the brain, lodging on the other side of the head, just inside the skull. What kept him alive, I'll never know, but I can guarantee that he might as well be dead; it was a rather nasty way to lobotomize a man, but it was effective, I can assure you."

The Federal agent frowned puzzledly. "Lobotomized? Like those operations they do on psychotics?"

"Similar," said Mallon. "But no psychotic was ever butchered up like this; and what I had to do to him to save his life didn't help anything."

The men looked at each other, then the big one said: "I'm sure you did the best you could, Dr. Mallon."

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The neurosurgeon rubbed the back of his hand across his forehead and looked steadily into the eyes of the big man.

"You wanted him alive," he said slowly, "and I have a duty to save life. But frankly, I think we'll all eventually wish we had the common human decency to let Paul Wendell die. Excuse me, gentlemen; I don't feel well." He turned abruptly and strode off down the hall.

ONE OF the men in the conservative suits said: "Louis Pasteur lived through most of his life with only half a brain and he never even knew it, Frank; maybe —"

"Yeah. Maybe," said the big man. "But I don't know whether to hope he does or hope he doesn't." He used his right thumbnail to pick a bit of microscopic dust from beneath his left index finger, studying the operation without actually seeing it. "Meanwhile, we've got to decide what to do about the rest of those screwballs. Wendell was the only sane one, and therefore the most dangerous — but the rest of them aren't what you'd call safe, either."

The others nodded in a chorus of silent agreement.

NOCTURNE — TEMPO DI VALSE

"NOW WHAT the hell's the matter with me?" thought Paul Wendell. He could feel nothing. Absolutely nothing: No taste, no sight, no hearing, no anything. "Am I breathing?" He couldn't feel any breathing. Nor, for that matter, could he feel heat, nor cold, nor pain.

"Am I dead? No. At least, I don't *feel* dead. Who am I? What am I?" No answer. *Cogito ergo sum.* What did that mean? There was something quite definitely wrong, but he couldn't quite tell what it was. Ideas seemed to come from nowhere; fragments of concepts that seemed to have no referents. What did that mean? What is a referent? A concept? He felt he knew intuitively what they meant, but what use they were he didn't know.

There was something wrong, and he had to find out what it was. And he had to find out through the only method of investigation left open to him.

So he thought about it.

SONATA — ALLEGRO CON BRIO

THE PRESIDENT of the United States finished reading the sheaf of papers before him, laid them neatly to one side, and looked up at the big man seated across the desk from him.

"Is this everything, Frank?" he asked.

"That's everything, Mr. President; everything we know. We've got eight men locked up

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in St. Elizabeths, all of them absolutely psychotic, and one human vegetable named Paul Wendell. We can't get anything out of them."

The President leaned back in his chair. "I really can't quite understand it. Extra-sensory perception — why should it drive men insane? Wendell's papers don't say enough. He claims it can be mathematically worked out — that he *did* work it out — but we don't have any proof of that."

The man named Frank scowled. "Wasn't that demonstration of his proof enough?"

A small, graying, intelligent-faced man who had been sitting silently, listening to the conversation, spoke at last. "Mr. President, I'm afraid I still don't completely understand the problem. If we could go over it, and get it straightened out —" He left the sentence hanging expectantly.

"Certainly. This Paul Wendell is a — well, he called himself a psionic mathematician. Actually, he had quite a respectable reputation in the mathematical field. He did very important work in cybernetic theory, but he dropped it several years ago — said that the human mind couldn't be worked at from a mechanistic angle. He studied various branches of psychology, and eventually dropped them all. He built several of those queer psionic machines — gold detectors, and something he called a hexer. He's done a lot of different things, evidently."

"Sounds like he was unable to make up his mind," said the small man.

THE PRESIDENT shook his head firmly. "Not at all. He did new, creative work in every one of the fields he touched. He was considered something of a mystic, but not a crackpot, or a screwball.

"But, anyhow, the point is that he evidently found what he'd been looking for for years. He asked for an appointment with me; I okayed the request because of his reputation. He would only tell me that he'd stumbled across something that was vital to national defense and the future of mankind; but I felt that, in view of the work he had done, he was entitled to a hearing."

"And he proved to you, beyond any doubt, that he had this power?" the small man asked.

Frank shifted his big body uneasily in his chair. "He certainly did, Mr. Secretary."

The President nodded. "I know it might not sound too impressive when heard second-hand, but Paul Wendell could tell me more of what was going on in the world than our Central Intelligence agents have been able to dig up in twenty years.

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And he claimed he could teach the trick to anyone.

"I told him I'd think it over. Naturally, my first step was to make sure that he was followed twenty-four hours a day. A man with information like that simply could not be allowed to fall into enemy hands." The President scowled, as though angry with himself. "I'm sorry to say that I didn't realize the full potentialities of what he had said for several days — not until I got Frank's first report."

"YOU COULD hardly be expected to, Mr. President," Frank said. "After all, something like that is pretty heady stuff."

"I think I follow you," said the Secretary. "You found he was already teaching this trick to others."

The President glanced at the FBI man. Frank said: "That's right; he was holding meetings — classes, I suppose you'd call them — twice a week. There were eight men who came regularly."

"That's when I gave the order to have them all picked up. Can you imagine what would happen if *everybody* could be taught to use this ability? Or even a small minority?"

"They'd rule the world," said the Secretary softly.

The President shrugged that off. "That's a small item, really. The point is that *nothing* would be hidden from *anyone*.

"The way we play the Game of Life today is similar to playing poker. We keep a straight face and play the cards tight to our chest. But what would happen if everyone could see everyone else's cards? It would cease to be a game of strategy, and become a game of pure chance.

"WE'D HAVE to start playing Life another way. It would be like chess, where you can see the opponent's every move. But in all human history there has never been a social analogue for chess. That's why Paul Wendell and his group had to be stopped — for a while at least."

"But what could you have done with them?" asked the Secretary. "Imprison them summarily? Have them shot? What *would* you have done?"

The President's face became graver than ever. "I had not yet made that decision. Thank Heaven, it has been taken out of my hands."

"One of his own men shot him?"

"That's right," said the big FBI man. "We went into his apartment an instant too late. We found eight madmen and a near-corpse. We're not sure what happened, and we're not sure we want to know. Anything that can drive eight reasonably stable men

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off the deep end in less than an hour is nothing to meddle around with."

"I wonder what went wrong?" asked the Secretary of no one in particular.

SCHERZO — PRESTO

PAUL WENDELL, too, was wondering what went wrong.

Slowly, over a period of immeasurable time, memory seeped back into him. Bits of memory, here and there, crept in from nowhere, sometimes to be lost again, sometimes to remain. Once he found himself mentally humming an odd, rather funeral tune:

Now, though you'd have said
that the head was dead,
For its owner dead was he,
It stood on its neck with a
smile well-bred,
And bowed three times to me.
It was none of your impudent,
off-hand nods . . .

Wendell stopped and wondered what the devil seemed so important about the song.

Slowly, slowly, memory returned.

When he suddenly realized, with crashing finality, where he was and what had happened to him, Paul Wendell went violently insane. Or he would have, if he could have become violent.

MARCHE FUNEBRE — LENTO

"OPEN YOUR mouth, Paul," said the pretty nurse. The hulking mass of not-quite-human gazed at her with vacuous eyes and opened its mouth. Dexterously, she spooned a mouthful of baby food into it. "Now swallow it, Paul. That's it. Now another."

"In pretty bad shape, isn't he?"

Nurse Peters turned to look at the man who had walked up behind her. It was Dr. Benwick, the new interne.

"He's worthless to himself and anyone else," she said. "It's a shame, too; he'd be rather nice looking if there were any personality behind that face." She shoveled another spoonful of mashed asparagus into the gaping mouth. "Now swallow it, Paul."

"How long has he been here?" Benwick asked, eyeing the scars that showed through the dark hair on the patient's head.

"Nearly six years," Miss Peters said.

"Hmmh! But they outlawed lobotomies back in the sixties."

"Open your mouth, Paul." Then, to Benwick: "This was an accident. Bullet in the head. You can see the scar on the other side of his head."

THE DOCTOR moved around to look at the left temple. "Doesn't leave much of a human being, does it?"

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"It doesn't even leave much of an animal," Miss Peters said. "He's alive, but that's the best you can say for him. (Now swallow, Paul. That's it.) Even an ameba can find food for itself."

"Yeah. Even a single cell is better off than he is. Chop out a man's forebrain and he's nothing. It's a case of the whole being *less* than the sum of its parts."

"I'm glad they outlawed the operation on mental patients," Miss Peters said, with a note of disgust in her voice.

Dr. Benwick said: "It's worse than it looks. Do you know why the anti-lobotomists managed to get the bill passed?"

"Let's drink some milk now, Paul. No, Doctor; I was only a little girl at that time."

"It was a matter of electroencephalographic records. They showed that there was electrical activity in the prefrontal lobes even after the nerves had been severed, which could mean a lot of things; but the A-L supporters said that it indicated that the forebrain was still capable of thinking."

Miss Peters looked a little ill. "Why — that's *horrible!* I wish you'd never told me." She looked at the lump of vegetablized human sitting placidly at the table. "Do you suppose he's actually *thinking,* somewhere, deep inside?"

"Oh, I doubt it," Benwick said hastily. "There's probably no real self-awareness, none at all. There couldn't be."

"I suppose not," Miss Peters said, "but it's not pleasant to think of."

"That's why they outlawed it," said Benwick.

RONDO — ANDANTE MA NON POCO

INSANITY IS a retreat from reality, an escape within the mind from the reality outside the mind. But what if there is no detectable reality outside the mind? What is there to escape from? Suicide — death in any form — is an escape from life. But if death does not come, and can not be self-inflicted, what then?

And when the pressure of nothingness becomes too great to bear, it becomes necessary to escape; a man under great enough pressure will take the easy way out. But if there is no easy way? Why, then a man must take the hard way.

For Paul Wendell, there was no escape from his dark, senseless Gehenna by way of death, and even insanity offered no retreat; insanity in itself is senseless, and senselessness was what he was trying to flee. The only insanity possible was the psychosis of regression, a fleeing into the past, into the crystallized, unchanging world of memory.

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So Paul Wendell explored his past, every year, every hour, every second of it, searching to recall and savor every bit of sensation he had ever experienced. He tasted and smelled and touched and heard and analyzed each of them minutely. He searched through his own subjective thought processes, analyzing, checking and correlating them.

Know thyself. Time and time again, Wendell retreated from his own memories in confusion, or shame, or fear. But there was no retreat from himself, and eventually he had to go back and look again.

He had plenty of time — all the time in the world. How can subjective time be measured when there is no objective reality?

EVENTUALLY, there came the time when there was nothing left to look at; nothing left to see; nothing to check and remember; nothing that he had not gone over in every detail. Again, boredom began to creep in. It was not the boredom of nothingness, but the boredom of the familiar. Imagination? What could he imagine, except combinations and permutations of his own memories? He didn't know — perhaps there might be more to it than that.

So he exercised his imagination. With a wealth of material to draw upon, he would build himself worlds where he could move around, walk, talk, and make love, eat, drink and feel the caress of sunshine and wind.

It was while he was engaged in this project that he touched another mind. He touched it, fused for a blinding second, and bounced away. He ran gibbering up and down the corridors of his own memory, mentally reeling from the shock of — *identification!*

WHO WAS he? Paul Wendell? Yes, he knew with incontrovertible certainty that he was Paul Wendell. But he also knew, with almost equal certainty, that he was Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton. He was living — had lived — in the latter half of the nineteenth century. But he knew nothing of the Captain other than the certainty of identity; nothing else of that blinding mind-touch remained.

Again he scoured his memory — Paul Wendell's memory — checking and rechecking the area just before that semi-fatal bullet had crashed through his brain.

And finally, at long last, he knew with certainty where his calculations had gone astray. He knew positively why eight men had gone insane.

Then he went again in search of other minds, and this time he knew he would not bounce.

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Quasi Una Fantasia
Poco Andante Pianissimo

An old man sat quietly in his lawnchair, puffing contentedly on an expensive briar pipe and making corrections with a fountain pen on a thick sheaf of typewritten manuscript. Around him stretched an expanse of green lawn, dotted here and there with squat cycads that looked like overgrown pineapples; in the distance, screening the big house from the road, stood a row of stately palms, their fronds stirring lightly in the faint, warm California breeze.

The old man raised his head as a car pulled into the curving driveway. The warm hum of the turboelectric engine stopped, and a man climbed out of the vehicle. He walked with easy strides across the grass to where the elderly gentleman sat. He was lithe, of indeterminate age, but with a look of great determination. There was something in his face that made the old man vaguely uneasy — not with fear but with a sense of deep respect.

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"I have some news for you, Mr. President," the younger one said.

The old man smiled wryly. "I haven't been President for fourteen years. Most people call me 'Senator' or just plain 'Mister'."

The younger man smiled back. "Very well, Senator. My name is Camberton, James Camberton. I brought some information that may possibly relieve your mind — or, again, it may not."

"You sound ominous, Mr. Camberton. I hope you'll remember that I've been retired from the political field for nearly five years. What is this shattering news?"

"Paul Wendell's body was buried yesterday."

The Senator looked blank for a second, then recognition came into his face. "Wendell, eh? After all this time. Poor chap; he'd have been better off if he'd died twenty years ago." Then he paused and looked up. "But just who are you, Mr. Camberton? And what makes you think I would be particularly interested in Paul Wendell?"

"Mr. Wendell wants to tell you that he is very grateful to you for having saved his life, Senator. If it hadn't been for your orders, he would have been left to die."

The Senator felt strangely calm, although he knew he should feel shock. "That's ridiculous, sir! Mr. Wendell's brain was hopelessly damaged; he never recovered his sanity or control of his body. I know; I used to drop over to see him occasionally, until I finally realized that I was only making my-

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self feel worse and doing him no good."

"Yes, sir. And Mr. Wendell wants you to know how much he appreciated those visits."

THE SENATOR grew red. "What the devil are you talking about? I just said that Wendell couldn't talk. How could he have said anything to you? What do you know about this?"

"I never said he *spoke* to me, Senator; he didn't. And as to what I know of this affair, evidently you don't remember my name. James Camberton."

The Senator frowned. "The name is familiar, but —" Then his eyes went wide. "Camberton! You were one of the eight men who — Why, *you're the man who shot Wendell!*"

Camberton pulled up an empty lawnchair and sat down. "That's right, Senator; but there's nothing to be afraid of. Would you like to hear about it?"

"I suppose I must." The old man's voice was so low that it was scarcely audible. "Tell me — were the other seven released, too? Have — have you all regained your sanity? Do you remember —" He stopped.

"Do we remember the extrasensory perception formula? Yes, we do; all eight of us remember it well. It was based on faulty premises, and incomplete, of course; but in its own way it was workable enough. We have something much better now."

The old man shook his head slowly. "I failed, then. Such an idea is as fatal to society as we know it as a virus plague. I tried to keep you men quarantined, but I failed. After all those years of insanity, now the chess game begins; the poker game is over."

"It's worse than that," Camberton said, chuckling softly. "Or, actually, it's much better."

"I don't understand; explain it to me. I'm an old man, and I may not live to see my world collapse. I hope I don't."

Camberton said: "I'll try to

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explain in words, Senator. They're inadequate, but a fuller explanation will come later."

And he launched into the story of the two-decade search of Paul Wendell.

CODA — ANDANTINO

"TELEPATHY? Time travel?" After three hours of listening, the ex-President was still not sure he understood.

"Think of it this way," Camberton said. "Think of the mind at any given instant as being surrounded by a shield — a shield of privacy — a shield which you, yourself have erected, though unconsciously. It's a perfect insulator against telepathic prying by others. You feel you *have* to have it in order to retain your privacy — your sense of identity, even. But here's the kicker: even though no one else can get in, *you* can't get out!

"You can call this shield 'self-consciousness' — perhaps *shame* is a better word. Everyone has it, to some degree; no telepathic thought can break through it. Occasionally, some people will relax it for a fraction of a second, but the instant they receive something, the barrier goes up again."

"Then how is telepathy possible? How can you go through it?" The Senator looked puzzled as he thoughtfully tamped tobacco into his briar.

"You don't go *through* it; you go *around* it."

"NOW WAIT a minute; that sounds like some of those fourth dimension stories I've read. I recall that when I was younger, I read a murder mystery — something about a morgue, I think. At any rate, the murder was committed inside a locked room; no one could possibly have gotten in or out. One of the characters suggested that the murderer traveled through the fourth dimension in order to get at the victim. He didn't go through the walls; he went around them." The Senator puffed a match flame into the bowl of his pipe, his eyes on the younger man. "Is that what you're driving at?"

"Exactly," agreed Camberton. "The fourth dimension. Time. You must go back in time to an instant when that wall did not exist. An infant has no shame, no modesty, no shield against the world. You must travel back down your own four-dimensional tube of memory in order to get outside it, and to do that, you have to know your own mind completely, and you must be *sure* you know it.

"For only if you know your own mind can you communicate with another mind. Because, at the 'instant' of contact, you *become* that person; you must enter his own memory at the beginning and go *up* the hypertube. You will have all his memories, his hopes, his fears, his

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sense of identity. Unless you know — beyond any trace of doubt — who *you* are, the result is insanity."

THE SENATOR puffed his pipe for a moment, then shook his head. "It sounds like Oriental mysticism to me. If you can travel in time, you'd be able to change the past."

"Not at all," Camberton said; "that's like saying that if you read a book, the author's words will change.

"Time isn't like that. Look, suppose you had a long trough filled with supercooled water. At one end, you drop in a piece of ice. Immediately the water begins to freeze; the crystallization front moves toward the other end of the trough. Behind that front, there is ice — frozen, immovable, unchangeable. Ahead of it there is water — fluid, mobile, changeable.

"The instant we call 'the present' is like that crystallization front. The past is unchangeable; the future is flexible. But they both exist."

"I see — at least, I think I do. And you can do all this?"

"Not yet," said Camberton; "not completely. My mind isn't as strong as Wendell's, nor as capable. I'm not the — shall we say — the superman he is; perhaps I never will be. But I'm learning — I'm learning. After all, it took Paul twenty years to do the trick under the most favorable circumstances imaginable."

"I see." The Senator smoked his pipe in silence for a long time. Camberton lit a cigaret and said nothing. After a time, the Senator took the briar from his mouth and began to tap the bowl gently on the heel of his palm. "Mr. Camberton, why do you tell me all this? I still have influence with the Senate; the present President is a protegé of mine. It wouldn't be too difficult to get you men — ah — put away again. I have no desire to see our society ruined, our world destroyed. Why do you tell me?"

CAMBERTON smiled apologetically. "I'm afraid you might find it a little difficult to put us away again, sir; but that's not the point. You see, we need you. We have no desire to destroy our present culture until we have designed a better one to replace it.

"You are one of the greatest living statesmen, Senator; you have a wealth of knowledge and ability that can never be replaced; knowledge and ability that will help us to design a culture and a civilization that will be as far above this one as this one is above the wolf pack. We want you to come in with us, help us; we want you to be one of us."

"I? I'm an old man, Mr. Camberton. I will be dead before this

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civilization falls; how can I help build a new one? And how could I, at my age, be expected to learn this technique?"

"Paul Wendell says you can. He says you have one of the strongest minds now existing."

The Senator put his pipe in his jacket pocket. "You know, Camberton, you keep referring to Wendell in the present tense. I thought you said he was dead."

Again Camberton gave him the odd smile. "I didn't say that, Senator; I said they buried his body. That's quite a different thing. You see, before the poor, useless hulk that held his blasted brain died, Paul gave the eight of us his memories; he gave us *himself*. The mind is not the brain, Senator; we don't know what it *is* yet, but we do know what it *isn't*. Paul's poor, damaged brain is dead, but his memories, his thought processes, the very essence of all that was Paul Wendell is still very much with us.

"Do you begin to see now why we want you to come in with us? There are nine of us now, but we need the tenth — you. Will you come?"

"I — I'll have to think it over," the old statesman said in a voice that had a faint quaver. "I'll have to think it over."

But they both knew what his answer would be.

★

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Science fiction fans and readers have doubtlessly dreamed glowing dreams of the glamor and wonder of being captain of a spaceship. And when spaceships become reality, then no doubt youngsters will dream of space as kids used to plan to go to sea and become skipper of a fine ship, or of becoming an airplane pilot.

And perhaps a spaceship skipper's life will be something like this....

HEAV'N, HEAV'N

by Eric Frank Russell

Illustrated by ORBAN

HE SWUNG wide the cast-iron doors, peered into the fireclay tunnel, and drew a deep breath. It was like looking into the business end of a spaceship. The doors should have opened upon heat and thunder; and beyond the tunnel the stars. A shuddering in the floor. Silver buttons upon his jacket, little silver comets on his collar and shoulder-straps.

"So!" rasped a voice. "Always you open the doors then pose like one paralyzed. What is dumbfounding about an oven?"

The uniform with its buttons and comets faded away, leaving him dressed in soiled white overalls. The floor was creaky but firm. The stars had gone as if they had never been.

"Nothing, Monsieur Trabaud."

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"Attention then! Prepare the heat as you have been shown."

"Yes, Monsieur Trabaud."

Taking an armful of fragrant pine branches from the nearby stack, he shoved them between the doors, used a long iron rake to poke them to the back of the tunnel. Then another bundle and another. He picked from the floor a dozen small, sticky pine-cones, tossed them one by one in among the packed branches. Then he contemplated the result. A rocket primed with cones and needles. But how absurd.

"Jules!"

"Yes, Monsieur Trabaud."

Snatching hurriedly at pine-branches, twigs and tiny logs, he stuffed them between the doors until the tunnel was full. That was done. Everything was ready.

The ship required only the starting spark. Eagle eyes high in the bow must watch for the ground-staff to scurry clear of the coming blast. Then the touch of a skilled, experienced finger upon a crimson button. After that a howl from below, a gigantic trembling, a slow upward climb becoming faster, faster, faster.

"NAME OF A dog! Now he is transfixed yet again. That I should be afflicted with such a dreamer."

Brushing past him, Trabaud thrust a flambeau of blazing paper into the filled oven, slammed shut the doors. He turned upon the other, his heavy black eyebrows frowning. "Jules Rioux, you are of the age sixteen. Yes?"

"Yes, Monsieur Trabaud."

"Therefore you are old enough to know that to bake bread there must be hotness within this sacred oven. And for that we must have fire; and to have fire we must apply a flame. Is that not so?"

"Yes, Monsieur Trabaud," he agreed shamefacedly.

"Then why should I have to tell you these things again and again and again?"

"I am an imbecile, Monsieur."

"If that were so, I could understand; I could forgive you. The good God makes fools in order to create pity." Seating himself on a dusty and bulging sack, Trabaud put forth a hairy arm, drew the other to him, went on in confidential tones. "Your brain wanders like a rejected lover in a strange country. Tell me, my little, who is this girl?"

"Girl?"

"This woman, this divine creature who fills your mind."

"There is no woman, Monsieur."

"No woman?" Trabaud was frankly astonished. "You sicken with desire and yet there is no woman?"

"No, Monsieur."

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"Then of what do you dream?"

"Of the stars, Monsieur."

"A THOUSAND thunders!" Trabaud spread hands in mute appeal and gazed prayerfully at the ceiling. "An apprentice baker. Of what does he dream? Of the stars!"

"I cannot help myself, Monsieur."

"Of course you cannot; you are but sixteen." He gave an expressive shrug. "I will ask you two things. How can there be people if no man makes bread? And how can anyone go among the stars if there are no people?"

"I do not know, Monsieur."

"There are ships flying between the stars," continued Trabaud, "for one reason only — because here we have life." Leaning to one side he picked up a yard-long loaf, yeasty and golden-crusted. "And this sustains life."

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Do you think that I would not like to adventure among the stars?" asked Trabaud.

"*You,* Monsieur?" Jules stared at him wide-eyed.

"Of a certainty. But I am old and gray-haired and I have risen to different eminence. There are many things I cannot do, shall never do. But I have become a great artist; I make beautiful bread."

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Not," emphasized Trabaud, wagging an admonitory finger, "*not* the machine-excreted pap of the electric bakery at Besancon, but real hand-made bread prepared to perfection. I make it with care, and with love; that is the secret. Upon each batch I bestow a little of my soul. It is the artist in me. You understand?"

"I understand, Monsieur."

"SO, JULES, the citizens do not attend merely to buy bread. True, it reads above my window: *Pierre Trabaud — Boulanger,* but that is no more than becoming modesty. The characteristic of the great artist is that he is modest."

"Yes, Monsieur Trabaud."

"I will tell you, Jules, why the citizens bring their baskets the moment the scent of my opened oven goes down the road. It is because they are of the taste discerning; they are revolted by the crudities of the electric bakery. They come here to purchase my masterpieces. Is that not so, Jules?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Then be content. In due time you, too, will be an artist. Meanwhile let us forget the stars; they are for others."

With that, Trabaud left his sack and commenced spreading a thin layer of flour over a zinc-topped table.

Jules stood silently watching.

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the oven doors from behind which came cracks and spits and hissing sounds. An odor of burning pine filled the bakery and invaded the street. After a while he opened the doors and a great blast of heat came out, full and fierce like the flame-trail of a rocket.

Heav'n, heav'n, gonna walk all over God's heav'n.

COLONEL PINET'S monocle glittered as he leaned over the counter, pointed to the supposedly-hidden tray and said, "One of those also, if you please."

"They are not for sale, M. le Colonel," declared Trabaud.

"Why are they not?"

"They are the errors of Jules; one more minute and they would have been charcoal. I do not sell blunders. Who wishes to eat charcoal?"

"I do," Pinet informed. "That is the unresolved difference between myself and my wife. She cooks lightly. I am never served with a well-scorched titbit. Permit me to enjoy one of Jules' mistakes."

"Monsieur —"

"I insist."

"Madame would never accept such a miserable loaf, and —"

"Madame has an appointment with her hairdresser, and has commissioned me to do the shopping," Colonel Pinet told him. "I propose to do it in my own way. You will perceive, my dear Trabaud, that I am an opportunist. Will you be good enough to serve me with an appetizing cinder, or must I seek one from the electric bakery?"

Trabaud flinched, glowered, selected the least scorched loaf from the tray, wrapped it to hide it from other eyes, handed it over with bad grace. "The good God preserve me. This Jules gains me one customer but then he will lose me a hundred."

"He causes you to suffer?" inquired Pinet.

"IT IS perpetual agony, M. le Colonel. I am compelled to watch him all the time. I have but to turn my back — so," — he turned his back to demonstrate —"and, *pouf!* his mind is off his work and floating among the stars like a runaway balloon."

"The stars, you say?"

"Yes, M. le Colonel. He is a space-conqueror chained to earth by unfortunate circumstances. Of that material I must make a baker."

"And what are these circumstances of which you speak?"

"His mother said to him, 'Trabaud requires an apprentice; this is your chance. You will leave school and become a baker.' So he came to me. He is obedient, you understand — so

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long as he happens to be with us upon this world."

"Mothers," said Pinet. He polished his monocle, screwed it back into his eye. "My mother wished me to be a beautifier of poodles. She said it was a genteel occupation; there was money in it. Her society friends would rush to me with their pet lapdogs." His long, slender fingers made clipping and curling motions while his face registered acute disdain. "I asked myself: what am I that I should manicure a dog? I enlisted in the Terraforce and was drafted to Mars. My mother was prostrated by the news."

"Alas," said Trabaud, all sympathy.

"Today she brags that her son is an officer of the four-comet rank. Such are mothers. They have no logic."

"It is perhaps as well," Trabaud suggested. "Else some of us might never have been born."

"You will show me this star-gazer," ordered Pinet.

"JULES!" bawled Trabaud, cupping hands around mouth and aiming toward the bakery at back. "Jules, come here."

No reply.

"You see?" Trabaud made a gesture of defeat. "The problem is formidable." He went into the bakery. His voice rang out, loud, impatient. "I called you; why did you not answer? M. le Colonel wishes to see you at once. Brush back your hair and make haste."

Jules appeared, his manner reluctant, his hands and hair white with flour. His gray eyes were clear and steady as he looked at the inquisitive Colonel Pinet.

"So!" commented Pinet, examining him with interest. "You hunger for the stars. *Why?*"

"Why does one desire anything?" said Jules. He gave a deep shrug. "It is my nature."

"An excellent answer," approved Pinet. "It is of one's nature. A thousand people entrust themselves hourly to a single pilot's hands. They are safe. Why? Because what he does is of his nature." He studied Jules slowly from head to feet. "Yet you bake bread."

"Someone must bake it," put in Trabaud. "We cannot all be star-roamers."

"Silence!" commanded Pinet. "You conspire with a woman to slaughter a soul; therefore you are an assassin. That is to be expected. You come from the Côtes du Rhône where assassins swarm like flies."

"M. le Colonel, I resent —"

"You are willing to continue to serve this murderer?" Pinet demanded of Jules.

"Monsieur Trabaud has been kind. You will pardon me —"

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"OF COURSE he has been kind," interjected Pinet. "He is a sly one. All the Trabauds are sly ones." He threw a broad wink at Trabaud but Jules caught it and felt vastly relieved. "One thing is demanded of all recruits," continued Pinet, more seriously. "Do you have any idea what that may be?"

"Intelligence, M. le Colonel," suggested Jules.

"Yes, of course; but it is not sufficient. It is required that a recruit should hunger and thirst for the Space Service."

"Which is as it should be," offered Trabaud. "One works hardest and best at the things for which one has some enthusiasm. If I were to care nothing about bread, I would now be a dirty-handed tobacco-spitter at the electric bakery."

"Every year ten thousand aspirants arrive at the Space College," Pinet informed Jules. "Of these, more than eight thousand fail to pass through. Their enthusiasm is not enough to support four years of intensive study and single-minded concentration. So they fail. It is disgusting, do you agree?"

"Yes, M. le Colonel, it is disgusting," confirmed Jules, frowning.

"Hah!" said Pinet, showing satisfaction. "Then let us deprive this vulture Trabaud of his prey. We shall find for him another one who is of the nature to bake."

"Monsieur —?"

"I will recommend you to the college; I ask of you only one thing in return."

Jules went momentarily breathless. "Oh, M. le Colonel! What do you wish?"

"I ask you, Jules, not to disgust me."

HE SAT IN the cabin, his eyes sunken and red-rimmed, while the *Fantome* whistled through space. In twenty tough, hectic years he had builded a ladder and climbed it to a captaincy. His present reputation was that of being one of the most conscientious commanders in the service. It was firmly founded upon a motto that had sustained him through all his most trying times.

"I ask you, Jules, not to disgust me."

His mother and Colonel Pinet had both died proud; and he was a captain.

As navigator, co-pilot and pilot he had served in the bow, where he'd always wanted to be, visibly plunging into the vast starfield that he loved so much. There had been regular hours of sleep, rest and work, the latter filled with the constant, never-ending thrill of things that could be seen, watched, studied.

Now he'd exchanged all that

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for imprisonment amidships, nothing around him but dull titanium-alloy walls, little before him save a desk smothered with papers.

All his waking hours, all his resting hours and part of his sleeping time, he answered questions, made decisions, wrote entries in official books, filled a thousand and one official forms. *Beaucoup de papierasserie* in the idiom of France-Sud.

ONE HOUR after supper, "Your pardon, Captain. The fat man from Dusseldorf is mad drunk again. He has injured a steward who tried to restrain him. Permission requested to lock him in the brig."

"Granted."

Or in the middle of a nervy, restless sleep an imperative shake of his shoulder followed by, "Your pardon, Captain. Tubes ten and eleven have cracked their linings. Permission requested to cut off power for two hours while repairs are carried out."

"Granted. Have the duty navigator bring me the current co-ordinates immediately you're ready to resume progress."

Two hours later another shoulder-shake. "Apologies for disturbing you, Captain. Repairs have been completed. Here are our present co-ordinates."

Questions.

Form-filling.

Requests, reports, demands, crises, decisions, answers, orders, commands. Continual harassment.

More paper-work.

"Your pardon, Captain. Two passengers, William Archer and Marion White, wish to be married. When would it be convenient for you to conduct the service?"

"Have they passed the medical examiner?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Has the groom a ring?"

"No, Captain."

"Ascertain the correct size and supply him from the ship's store at the standard charge of twenty dollars."

"And the service, Captain?"

"At four bells. Let me know whether that time suits them."

PAPER-WORK again. Duplicated copies of two birth certificates, two emigration certificates, two health certificates, two entry warrants. Copies in triplicate of marriage certificates for Earth Government, Sirius Government and Space Service Record Office. One original copy for the bride.

And so it went on, every conceivable problem great or petty, at all hours without let-up. Upon landing after a long run, it was considered normal for the captain to be the only one to stagger down the ramp, whirly-minded with constant

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nerve-testing and serious lack of sleep. Sometimes he was tempted to take action to demote himself, except that —

"I ask you, Jules, not to disgust me."

THE *Fantome* came down at Bathalbar, on the planet Dacedes, system of Sirius. The run had numbered two hundred eighty-five Earth-days.

Landing formalities over, Captain Jules Rioux left the ship, wandered hazily to Mama Kretschmer's. That was routine and in accordance with best psychological advice.

A ship's commander needs deep, potent sleep and plenty of it. But first he must expunge from his mind all thoughts of the vessel, the journey, and everything pertaining thereto. He must so condition himself mentally that he will slumber like a child, deeply, happily, right around the clock. The preliminary technique was to discard past problems and walk into one's own heaven.

Mama Kretschmer, a big-bosomed hausfrau from Bavaria, nodded familiarly, said, "Der Kapitan Roo. I am pliss. You vant der sem as effer?"

"If you please, Madame Kretschmer."

He went into the back room. The front one, big, crowded and noisy, held commanders who'd got in several days ahead and already were feeling their oats. The back room, soundproofed, with heavily cushioned reclining chairs, contained three semi-comatose officers of his own rank. He did not speak to these. They offered no greeting, seemed unaware of his entry. They were knocking at the doors of paradise.

In short time Mama brought him a glass of navy rum, neat, warmed to blood-heat, spiked with a few drops of oil of cinnamon. He lay back, settled himself comfortably and sought for the land of peace.

The spiced rum glowed within his bowels, fumed into his head. The silence bore down upon his eyelids. Slowly, ever so slowly, he moved away from this time of exhaustion and walked into that other world.

Women with broad, rosy-cheeked peasant faces, little lacework caps on their hair, baskets on their arms. Long iron trays sliding over pine-ash and coming out loaded with warm, yeasty, golden-crusted loaves, long ones, flat ones, curly ones, plaited ones.

A chatter of feminine voices reciting village gossip amid an ineffable fragrance of pine-smoke and fresh-baked bread.

Heav'n, heav'n.

★

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While the majority opinion holds that Venus is probably a sort of dust-bowl planet, no one has ever seen the surface of this world, or observed it from a distance of much less than 80 miles. It's continually covered with clouds. Thus, it isn't impossible that the minority, which favors a sort of jungle-like planet, may be in the right. And, in order to avoid chauvinism, we herewith offer a tale based upon the minority opinion.

VENUS TRAP

by Robert Silverberg

Illustrated by Orban

THEY BROUGHT it to me, of course. I'm the head of this outfit, since they have the idea I'm a diplomat, and so they brought it to me.

It started in my office; I'm the Terran attache to the Venusian Embassy in New York — the catch being that the Venusians don't know that a fellow named Mart Robinson is attached to them.

My job, mostly, is simply to sit around and keep an eye on our blue-skinned brothers from space, and make sure they're only double-crossing us and not pulling a triple cross. Which, knowing them, I consider altogether likely at any time.

The Venusian Embassy is a tall, imposing building in midtown Manhattan. It looks just like every other office building in the midtown section. The only difference is that you can get in-

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side any of the other office buildings without much trouble. No Earthman has entered the Venusian Embassy since the day the Treaty was signed, and the windows are pleasantly opaque.

No Earthman except one, that is. His name was Hilary Bowie, and he was a short, sad-looking, washed-out little fellow with an uncommon faculty for getting into places he wasn't expected to get into. He, and he alone, was my pipeline into the Venusian Embassy.

HE WALKED into my office, carrying a fairly large, ominous-looking wooden box, and having a hard time of it. He set it down in front of me, and let me contemplate it unopened for a couple of minutes. "A present for Daddy," he said. He smiled. Somehow Hilary Bowie's smile has a way of making me feel even gloomier.

I looked at the box. It was about two feet long, about the same high, and had airholes punched in it. "You bring me a pet?"

Hilary nodded. "A cute one," he said. "Real cute." He tapped the box, and I heard an unpleasant scrabbling sound come from within. It sounded like an army of crabs.

"Cut the suspense," I told him. "I'm busy, Hilary. There's a new Treaty revision coming up next month, and I have to —"

"Sure," Hilary said, and he smiled again. He's got a smile that makes a person feel like crying. "But you're going to have to write a different kind of treaty when you see what I've got here." He shivered. "Now that I look back, I don't see how I got the thing out of the building."

By now I was starting to get impatient, but I didn't dare open the box. "Go ahead," I urged. "Show the damned thing to me, will you?"

"Get me a bird cage," he said blandly.

"*What?*"

"All right, so don't get me a bird cage." He reached for the lid of the box.

"Hold it," I said nervously. I flipped on my intercom, with none too steady fingers.

"Cindy? I want a bird cage, on the double. About two feet high, and I want it here in five minutes, if not sooner. That's all."

"Yes, Mr. Robinson," she said, sounding more than a little puzzled. I could imagine some vivid cursing going on in the outer office, but I knew she'd get the bird cage.

AND SURE enough, she did. That's what I like so much about this job: when I say something, they *hop*. She walked into my office about three minutes later, clutching a great big

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gleaming bird cage in her lovely milk-white hand.

"Here you are, sir," she said coolly, as if digging up bird cages on a moment's notice were part of her everyday routine.

"Good girl. Just put it on the desk."

She looked queerly at Hilary's carton for a moment and left. As she went out she shrugged her shoulders, making sure I caught the gesture. Hilary has never impressed the rest of my staff much, but he's worth his weight in plutonium to me.

"There's your bird cage," I said. "Now show me." I glanced at my watch. Hilary had used up fifteen minutes of valuable time, and I had sixty-two different projects on the line with the brass upstairs breathing on my neck about all of them.

"Here you are, Mart. A little bit of poultry I picked up while visiting the Embassy this morning. As far as I know, they haven't missed it yet."

He leaned the box up near the open door of the bird cage and gingerly slid the lid off. There was a flutter of snow-white wings, and then I heard the door of the bird cage clang shut in a hurry.

I stared at the creature inside. A good ten seconds passed, and I just *stared*.

"All right, Hilary. You've hit the jackpot. What is it?"

"Can't you tell, Mart? It's plain as day, of course. It's a pigeon."

"Oh, sure," I said. "A pigeon! I should have seen it immediately, beyond any doubt. But," I asked, "where'd it get that extra head? And what about those talons?"

"That's your problem, my friend," Hilary said.

IT SURE was. I stared glumly at the weird-looking thing in the bird cage.

Underneath it all, I could see now, there was a pigeon — an ordinary, perfectly conventional, harmless little fantail. But someone or something had redesigned this pigeon drastically.

Each of its two heads ended in a razor-sharp beak. Its legs were sturdy things tipped with claws like steel knives. Its four eyes were beady, bright, and, I thought, unnaturally intelligent. This particular pigeon had been converted into a pretty deadly sort of fighting machine.

I gestured out the window at the gleaming, opaque-windowed, unapproachable Venusian Embassy.

"I suppose you got this little pet over there?"

"I did," Hilary said. "I found him in a laboratory on — let me see — the forty-second floor. No, the forty-third. It was the devil's own job getting him out, too, but I figured you'd like to have a look.

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"There were some other cuties in there too. A six-legged cat, a dog with three heads — an honest-to-God Cerberus — another cat with the damnedest mouthful of teeth you'd want to see, each one about six inches long and sharp as needles. They have a whole laboratory, filled with these pretty beasts."

"Each one having the basic form of some common Terran animal," I said.

"Right. They've taken our animals and built them into things like this." He pointed to the bird cage.

JUST THEN the intercom buzzed.

"What is it, Cindy?"

"Mr. Garvey to see you, sir."

I frowned. Garvey was a scientist in government service. He also happened to be my sister's husband, and he felt that gave him some claim on my time. He had made a habit of dropping in on me every time he had some hairbrained project that he thought could use my political influence.

"Tell him I'm in conference, Cindy," I said, watching the ex-pigeon making ferocious attempts to escape its cage and start slicing us up. "Tell him I can see him in a while, and he can wait if he's in no hurry."

"Yes, Mr. Robinson."

I turned back to Bowie. "Look, Hilary. You say the Venusians are playing around with Earth animals?"

"That's my guess, Mart. You know how shrewd they are at genetics. I guess this represents one of their little experiments."

"You don't have any notion why they're doing this?" I asked.

"Not the slightest," Hilary said. "For the sheer love of pure science, I suppose. Doesn't that sound likely?"

"Yeah," I said. "Real likely."

I GOT UP and walked to the window and stared out. My office faced the Embassy Building, and that gave me ample opportunity to spend long hours staring out, wondering what the hell was going on behind its opaque windows.

Earth had been on more-or-less friendly terms with Venus for nearly fifteen years, which meant we had an Embassy up there and they had one down here, and that was the size of it. It was an uneasy sort of friendship, with not much warmth about it. We were both somewhat scared — hell, scared stiff — of the Martian Combine, and the Earth-Venus alliance was one of pure convenience. Though we didn't admit it publicly, of course.

The Venusians were fairly well humanoid, if you don't mind the blue skin and the extra set of arms. But we didn't trust

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them too much; they weren't, after all, human, and you can never tell what an extra-terrestrial will do next.

That unpleasant but painfully true fact explains why I had a job. Someone had to watch the Venusians; and I did, or tried to. I had a carefully-nurtured spy-system (consisting mostly of Hilary Bowie), and I had some contacts here and there who — well, there's no point going into details which might better well be kept out of the open.

BUT THERE was a revision of the Earth-Venus treaty coming up next month, and I had been warned from upstairs to keep a double patrol out. Before we committed ourselves to yet another alliance with Venus, we wanted to make thoroughly sure that we weren't tying ourselves into knots. The Venusians were too shifty to go signing peace treaties with just like that.

And now this.

"You know the scoop on this, don't you?" I asked. "If we don't find out just what the hell is going on in that building, and stop it before that treaty gets signed, we may find that we've handed Earth over to the Venusians on a stainless-steel platter."

Hilary nodded. "I'll be in there digging, Chief. Meantime you can keep the pet."

"Thanks," I said. I buzzed Cindy. "Send in Mr. Garvey, will you, dear?"

As Garvey entered, I surreptitiously slipped the bird cage down out of view behind my desk. I didn't want him to see it just yet.

"Hello, Frank," I said. "What's on your mind?"

"Just thought I'd drop in to see how business was going," Garvey said cheerily. There are times when I wonder what Jackie sees in that utter fathead; but she never questions my tastes in women, and so I keep from venturing my opinions on her husband.

HE TOOK a package from under his coat. I couldn't resist a quiver when he did that; after Hilary's visit, I was half expecting Garvey to produce a six-headed leapfrog or something like that.

"I've been doing some experiments, Mart. I thought you'd like a sample." He unpacked the little box. I watched, more nervously than usual.

And he drew out the biggest tomato you ever want to see. Pretty near the size of a melon.

I'm afraid I looked at him awfully impatiently. "Say, Frank —"

"Just a minute, Mart. Take a look at this tomato. Big, isn't it?"

"Yes," I admitted. "So what?" I glanced at my watch.

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He grinned. "It's mine; I grew it."

"Didn't know you were a farmer, Frank! A new sideline?"

"I grew this in my lab, Mart. I told you I'd been dabbling with hydroponics." He held the thing out proudly. "Ever *see* one that big?"

"What did you do to it?" I asked. "Blow it up with hot air?"

Garvey looked hurt. "You never take my work seriously, do you? This tomato's been treated with a growth hormone I've developed — an improved auxin."

"I thought oxen pulled plows."

"Very funny. For your information, auxin happens to be a well-known scientific term for the group of hormones that induce growth in plants. It's a relatively simple hydrocarbon, and has been commercially available for years as beta-indolyl acetic acid. But I've been working on a sort of super-auxin that puts the old stuff to shame."

HE HELD out the tomato for my inspection. I hefted it in my hand. It was *big,* all right.

"That was produced with a one-in-two-thousand concentration of my new drug, Mart! If I'd wanted to I could have grown a tomato the size of a watermelon! The size of a cow! But —"

Here comes the catch, I thought.

"My appropriation's been cut off," he said sadly. "And Jackie thought, if I saw you, perhaps you could —"

"— get you some money for experiments," I completed. I started to say no, then stopped. Bluntness is wasted on him.

"I thought we might go partners on the deal," he said timidly. "It has great commercial possibilities."

"Let me think about it a while," I said. "Sounds good."

Suddenly he was all gratitude. "Would you, Mart? It —"

I quieted him with a gesture. "I've got something more on my mind than big tomatoes, Frank. What do you think of this baby?" I reached down and lifted the bird cage into view.

HE STARED silently for almost a minute. "Venusian?" he said at length.

"Partially," I said.

"It was a pigeon once," Garvey said. "I mean, is it the Venusians who — oh, it has to be. There's not a geneticist on Earth who could produce a creature like that."

"You're sure of that, Frank?"

"It's my field, isn't it? That pigeon's been genetically manipulated by experts, and I mean experts. The Venusians have for-

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gotten more about genes and chromosomes than we've ever learned. I'd stake my reputation as a geneticist that that bird's a Venusian product."

I nodded. For once I took him seriously; Frank may be a featherhead in many ways, but I trust anything he says professionally.

"Any opinions?" I asked.

"That's your job, isn't it? All I can tell you is that it's been manipulated, and a damned good job of it." He leaned over and whispered confidentially. "Tell me — have you people made any progress in combing genetic techniques out of the blueskins? They know more about genetic engineering than —"

"I know," I said. We'd been trying frantically to steal genetic info from the Venusians, but we hadn't been half so successful as they had in lifting our atomics knowledge. "Do you think this thing will breed true?" I asked.

"I don't doubt it," said Garvey. "I'm sure it's a genetic mutation, not a mere phenotype alteration. Nasty-looking thing, isn't it?"

I nodded. "It's a nasty business, Frank." I stood up, and started to shoo him out. "Try me on that tomato deal soon, will you?"

"Sure, Mart, sure. I don't want to interrupt anything —"

"And give my best to Jackie, and, uh, drop around sometime soon, huh?"

"Sure thing," he said, as I nudged him through the door.

THE BRASS reacted as expected. I took the bird to Pitman, my immediate superior, and spent about half an hour explaining the meaning of genetic manipulation — no easy job, since for one thing explaining things to Pitman is a task for a supergenius and for another I'm pretty vague myself about genes and chromosomes.

His reaction was a simple and predictable one.

"This looks dangerous to me, Robinson. I'd suggest you let Colonel Kennerly have a look at it before we go any further."

Kennerly bounced me up to Madison, and Madison sent me on to the Chief. I half expected him to refer me to the Archangel Gabriel, or someone, but he didn't.

"You say your men saw dozens of these experiments being carried on in the Embassy?" the Chief asked, his thin lips set in a grim mask.

I nodded.

"Hmm. This looks dangerous to me, Robinson. Put a stop to it before the treaty's signed."

He looked at me with that what's - the - matter - you - need - an - engraved - invitation? gleam in his eye, and I got out of there in a hurry.

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Put a stop to it.

Sure. Walk into the Venusian Embassy, which is so bottled up that not even the Chief could get in there, and demand that they cut out their genetic monkeyshines. I could just see it now.

I pictured myself staring up at some big blueskin and saying pompously, "One of my spies has found out about your nefarious doings. On behalf of my government, I demand you Bring These Activities to a Halt or else."

Oh, sure.

There had to be some more subtle way about it. I had to do it, quickly, to be sure, but with great subtlety, so that the Venusian got scared and laid off.

But how do you scare a Venusian?

I BLASTED off for Venus later that evening on a chartered ship, figuring the best thing was to go straight to the root of the trouble. Besides, I'd always had an urge to see the place.

It was hot and sticky. I got a native carrier to take me to the Terran Embassy, which was a frumpy-looking building about three stories high, in an obscure corner of some village.

I walked in, bird cage dangling from my hand.

"Hello," I said. "I'm Robinson."

"Glad to meet you." The short, squat, heavily-tanned, worried-looking man who greeted me was Jansen, the new ambassador. He'd just been promoted. When I had last seen him, back in 2160 or so, he had been a file clerk, but time has a way of moving on.

He didn't look much like an ambassador, clad only in a pair of trunks. I couldn't blame him; I was still in my business suit, and regretting it. It's *hot* on Venus.

"You've met me before," I told him. "You were a clerk in the E-T office, and I was —"

"— the kid who ran the mimeo machine!" Jansen's dark face creased in a smile. "What brings you up here?"

"Trouble. Big trouble." I unveiled the bird cage and told him the whole story — how the Venusians were plotting something devious with our wild-life, and how we didn't like it.

"That's a beaut," he said, pointing at the pigeon, which was still fiercely attacking its cage. "It's as weird as some of the things they've been doing here."

"You know about them?"

"THE JUNGLES are full of them," Jansen said. "They just turn them loose after they've manipulated them. You ought to see them. The local fauna is strange-looking enough, but once the blueskins get

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through juggling them they're *really* out of this world."

He reached up and rang a bell. Another Terran came in.

"Excuse me," he said. He turned to the other. "Bring in a bowl of meat, will you? It's feeding time."

The newcomer grinned. "Your pet's getting hungry, eh?"

"Something fierce. I forgot to feed it yesterday." He turned back to me as the other left. "Sorry."

"What sort of pet?"

"Local creature," he said. "Helps brighten up the office." He paced nervously back and forth. "You say there's a treaty revision coming up?"

I was astounded. "You mean you didn't know?"

"They never tell me anything," Jansen said, smiling apologetically. "I'm just a glorified file clerk still. The only reason we have an Embassy on Venus is because they've got one down there, and we can't let them get a step ahead of us. Don't you forget it."

"Yes," I said, trying to ignore his outburst. "There *is* a treaty revision coming up. And I have to put a stop to this genetic foolery before we sign the treaty, or else."

Jansen smiled. "Just like that, eh? I wish you luck. The Venusians are as talkative as clams. You'll have to scare them real hard to get them to bow to you."

"I know," I said, thinking of the calm, inscrutable blueskins. It'll take a heap of scaring, I thought.

JUST THEN the other Earthman came back in, bearing a little plate with some chunks of meat in it.

"Watch this," Jansen said. "It may amuse you."

He drew aside a curtain and revealed a potted plant, about a foot high — the meanest-looking, ugliest mess of vegetation I'd ever seen. He put the dish of meat down in front of it, and hurriedly drew away his hand.

I watched in horror as the plant lowered a couple of stringy, tendril-like branches, curled them firmly around two red chunks of meat, lifted them, and quickly stowed them inside a gaping orifice in the middle of a tangle of twisted, ugly leaves.

There was a gulping noise, and the tendrils descended again.

"*What is it?*" I managed to say.

"A local plant," Jansen said. "Fairly common in the jungles around here." He grinned. "Carnivorous."

"So I see," I said weakly.

"It preys on small wild life. I don't think the plant bothers

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the Venusians very much; they keep them as pets too."

I stared at it. "Some pet," I said. "Scares me to pieces. I wonder what a big one would be like."

"Ghastly, I suppose," Jansen said. But this one keeps us entertained. It keeps our minds off problems."

"Yes," I said. A new light began to dawn in my eyes. "Say — you think I could get a call through to Earth right away? I want to talk to someone, and in a hurry!"

MY BOY arrived on the next rocket in, very much mystified and somewhat annoyed. He claimed he had all sorts of important work to finish, but I shushed him and very carefully lined out the assignment for him. He nodded grimly and set to work.

And he delivered. And how, did he deliver!

The Venusian Overlord came to visit us, at my request, the day after the job was finished. I dressed formally, in my Earth clothes. I sweated blasphemously, but I felt I wouldn't be able to sound commanding and business-like in a G-string.

Jansen introduced me as special envoy from Earth, and then edged away to leave us politely alone.

We fenced verbally for about five minutes, exchanging pleasantries about our respective planets, and sizing each other up. Like most blueskins, he seemed fully clothed in nothing but his loincloth; he was about seven feet tall, and with shoulders to match. He needed the big shoulders; they provided muscle anchors for his four arms.

Then I began to bring in the genetics deal. I worked around it most delicately, explaining how we were aware that the Venusians were doing all sorts of experiments with our native wild-life. I didn't bother to tell him that we were worried silly about what they might do with the products of the experiments.

"THERE'S NOTHING in the Treaty that forbids members of our Embassy from performing genetic experiments," the blueskin reminded me. "We are allowed to do whatsoever we please, just so long as we remain within our delimited confines." He spoke clearly and precisely, as if he'd studied our language just for the occasion.

"Ah, yes," I said. "But the animals your laboratories are producing constitute a *potential* danger to our planet, should they get loose. And, on occasion, this has happened." I uncovered the bird cage. *Exhibit A,* I thought.

"We apprehended this one near your Embassy," I lied.

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"You see, of course, how dangerous a beast it is?"

The Venusian frowned, lifting one of his arms to his forehead in a gesture I knew meant annoyance. "Yes, yes, of course. But I'm sure this was a mere accident. I'll see to it that due precautions are taken in the future, naturally, but you understand that our genetics program is an important part of our scientific development, just as — ah — your atomics researches on Earth are to you. You can no more expect us to halt our program than we would expect you to halt work on atomics."

There was a glint in his eye that suggested to me that he might be willing to consider a trade; he might swap some geneticists for a couple of our nuclear physicists. It didn't sound like a bad idea, but it wasn't up to me to negotiate it. Leave that up to the Treaty-makers, I thought.

"Well," I said, "I understand your position perfectly." At that point I decided I hated diplomacy. "And we of Earth will withdraw our objections, provided you instruct your Embassy to take stronger precautions against the escape of any of their — ah — products."

HE SMILED happily, and reached out with his two lower hands to grasp mine. "Fine. It pleases me that there will be no friction between our worlds."

I stood up, sliding my hand from between his. "Oh, by the way," I said casually. "Earth has begun a small genetic engineering program of its own, you know. Nothing to compare with the magnificent Venusian techniques, of course, but it's a beginning, a beginning —"

I rang the bell. Jansen appeared. "Bring in the meat," I said. "It's feeding time."

I turned to the somewhat puzzled Venusian. "This is one of our first products," I said. "An opening, fumbling effort, shall we say? You'll note that our interests are chiefly in the flora, unlike yours."

I drew back the curtain and revealed one of the Venusian carnivorous plants. This one was some ten feet in height. It reared up from the floor like an immense bear, with its great nauseating tendrils waving slowly back and forth in the air. It made me sick.

I heard a little strangled cry of amazement come from the Venusian's throat, and I swear his blue skin turned a tinge greener.

Jansen reappeared, pushing a little truck to which some poor Venusian beast was clamped — an animal almost the size of a man. He rolled the little truck along the floor.

As soon as it came within

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reach, one of those immense undulating tendrils came pouncing down on it. I watched, sickened, but yet enjoying the whole thing.

The plant fed, noisily.

I SHOOK Garvey's hand. "Wonderful job, Frank," I said sincerely. "I've just had word from Hilary that the Venusian Embassy on Earth is scared witless; they've made all sorts of concessions in the new Treaty provided we destroy our carnivourous plant before it has a chance to spread any seeds. They've even agreed to turn over some genetics information to us."

I shuddered, and knew how the Venusians must have taken it. They'd be willing to do almost anything provided we killed that plant.

I drew out my blaster and clicked the safety.

"What are you going to do?" Garvey asked suddenly, paling. My respect for him, which had been building ever since he'd produced that marvelous horror, melted immediately. Away from his lab, he was still a fool. I'll bet he expected me to blast him down where he stood.

"I'm going to get rid of your pet," I said.

"What for?"

"Because, you damned idiot, it's dangerous to the whole of Venusian society, and we've already agreed to destroy it before it breeds. Why, if that thing started seeding —"

Suddenly Garvey burst into chuckles. I thought he'd split from laughter.

"What's so funny?" I snapped.

"YOU NEVER did learn anything about science, did you, Mart? I didn't do any genetic engineering on that plant, man — all I did was blow up one specimen with my hormones, same as I did with that tomato I showed you. But that's *not* a mutation. It won't breed big plants any more than a rat with his tail chopped off will breed tailless rats. Any offspring of our plant here will be small-sized, of course, and so there's nothing to fear from him. Unless you go too close to him."

"You can't be too careful."

"No," he said dreamily. I looked at him. He seemed to be floating somewhere.

"What's with you?"

"I was just thinking," he said. "When the Venusians get around to turning over their techniques to us —"

"What then?"

"Think of the wonderful tomatoes we'll grow!" he said, almost shouting. "And they'll breed true!"

I smiled. What else can you do?

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Psychopathology has offered possible answers to why, from time to time, people in large quantities "see" strange things in the sky which manage to evade trained scientific observers, or conform to what is known about the behavior of falling or flying bodies. And mass hysteria is by no means a product of the present century. But—what if these human foibles were deliberately being exploited?

THE FOURTH INVASION

by Henry Josephs

DR. CLAYTON'S face was impassive as a marble mask when he turned to young Corelli. For a moment, the little group stood there in embarrassed silence in the classroom, shifting uneasily from one foot to the other, feigning interest in the paperweights upon Clayton's desk, or in the utterly uninspiring scenes on the sidewalk outside the window.

"You say, Corelli, that you saw three — er, Martian — ships. Can you describe them?"

Corelli blinked as he felt the weight of his colleagues' eyes boring into him. "I didn't say they were *Martian,* sir — only that they seemed to be unearthly. And they were not the conventional saucer-shaped things — they *acted* like saucers skimming across the water. That's what made me think they were genuine. And they didn't seem to be going fast enough so that I'd expect to hear a roar like a jetplane.

"It struck me that this might not be the way they fly, naturally, but the way they might fly if the pilots were having trouble adjusting the controls to a heavier atmosphere than they were used to."

Clayton tapped the tabletop with his fingers. "What about you, Marty? Did you see three ships?"

Big Gene Marty, football star, was the least nervous. "Can't be sure about *ships,* Doc," he rumbled. "I did see something strange disappearing over the horizon. It — I mean they — might have been what Tony says; but whatever it was, there were three of them. But I saw something else, because I was looking in another direction. What I saw first was a couple of funny-look-

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ing shapes floating down near the ground. Didn't look like parachutists, yet they seemed big enough to be men — or at least, small men."

"Interesting. All right, what about the rest of you? How many saw the ships?"

A CHORUS answered him. "I see," Clayton mused. "You all agree on the behavior. And you all think there were three — not four — not two. Three?"

It was agreed.

Clayton rustled the pile of newspapers. "The reports in here vary. I learn with amazement that you gentlemen seem to have missed completely the spurts of flame that issued from the alien ships — flame which is reported to have set a house on fire. And no one seems to have noticed that the invaders, in descending, glided on huge black wings."

Corelli blushed a fiery crimson. "Dr. Clayton," he protested, "we aren't making these things up for popular consumption. We're just telling you what we actually saw — that is — what — what — we — saw looked like to us."

Clayton nodded. "Of course. That is all people were doing back in 1938 when the Martians landed in New Jersey, at the time Orson Welles presented a radio version of H. G. Wells' 'War of the Worlds'. Or when the 'Flying Saucer' craze first started. Or when Fantafilm put on their big publicity stunt for the improved 3-D movie, 'The Outsiders', and people saw the aliens over Broadway and heard them address the populace in weird, booming tones.

"Gentlemen, I am not pleased to find students of this University engaging in such unwanted extra-curricular activity as inventing interplanetary scares. I don't think Washington will be amused, either."

Corelli clicked his heels. "Sir," he stated in dignified tones, "I resent these implications. I assume they have been directed at me. At no time have I talked about this to reporters, or in any way engaged in what you accuse me of. If you want my resignation from this school, you may have it."

"Really? You think that an air of dignified innocence will undo the damage done? I am well aware of your experiments with the *y* wave, gentlemen — and it was on the *y* wave that the messages came. You may be interested to know that the number of lives lost, the property damage, the business losses due to the panic, have not yet been fully determined; but it makes the hysteria following the Fantafilm hoax very small potatoes by comparison.

"You may withdraw now, gentlemen; this affair will be discussed at greater length later, re-

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gardless of what the FBI decides. I had hoped that the main culprit would try to save unwitting accomplices from a measure of grief. That is all."

The seven students left Dr. Clayton's office in record time.

PROFESSER ELTON rapped the table for silence. "Gentlemen," he began, "Dr. Clayton and I both extend our sincere apologies." He smiled wanly. "Of course, that does not exonerate anyone from the charge of gullibility. But Harvey Gale's confession has been fully confirmed by the FBI, and you — and this University — have been cleared. The public knows now that your testimony helped lead to the facts in the case.

"To me, the most interesting feature of this business is the fact that Gale was able to put over this hoax, despite the fact that the public had been taken in three times before. The Orson Welles scare rode on a wave of war-hysteria; the Flying Saucer craze followed world war; the Fantafilm hoax came when the world was still in dread of sudden bombings. But the Gale Hoax — what can we call it but what is loosely known as the continuing gullibility of human beings?

"We trust that this demonstration you have just observed will help you to remember that while seeing may be believing, it's wise not to believe until it has been established just what you saw."

IN HIS private office, Dr. Clayton leaned forward over his desk. Or, to be more exact, something that looked like Dr. Clayton leaned over the desk. The face was impassive as marble, but, from out a slit in his chest, a pair of black antennae-like feelers were vibrating into a framed picture on the wall, from which the picture had been slid aside.

"Landing safely effected. Brief panic when several Terrestrials sighted ships; all clear now. Full report, containing details on latest successful persuasion of Earthlings that Martians or other aliens are imaginary, will follow."

From the speaker beneath the desk came sounds of gasps, heavy breathing, then shuffling footsteps. Clayton pushed the picture back into place, then took off the skin-painted vest he wore, with the flat box on its inside. He snapped a switch on the side of his desk.

"There; now they can't hear — if any are still hanging around."

Professor Elton looked at him bewilderedly. "I don't get it. After all the risk we went to, to convince the public that there ain't no ghosts — as the old saying goes — you arrange to have students hear you going into a 'report to the home planet' act. And you use a code they all

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know. What's the point in undoing it?"

Clayton nodded. "It looks somewhat mad, doesn't it? Well . . . the Psychology Team was sure of the necessity. You see, more and more humans remain unconvinced each time one of these hoaxes are exposed. The unconvinced are sure that something fiendish is going on beneath the surface, that the authorities — all kinds from civil to scientific — are engaged in a vast cover-up. We can't prevent this belief; we don't know how to keep it from spreading. So — the alternative is to direct it."

Elton nodded slowly. "I can see possibilities along that line — but just what direction was this supposed to kind of bring about?"

"Why, obviously, if large-scale invasion from Mars is imminent — and this is the belief that we're all catering to — then it follows that the invasion hasn't already taken place. The two of us, and Harvey Gale, will disappear shortly in one way or another, and gradually public cries for effective planetary defense will mount.

"You know who will direct the defense."

★

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Department

INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

by Robert A. Madle

NEWS AND VIEWS: One of the best done TV fantasy shows we've yet seen was the June 4th Studio One presentation of Frank M. Robinson's Lippincott novel, "The Power." This is as gripping a superman story you'll ever want to see — or read. The book, incidentally, is doing very well and has gone into a second printing. Frank informs us that he is no longer affiliated with the editorial staff of *Rogue,* other business forcing him to give up the editorial reins.

Harlan Ellison, very prominent science fiction fan, is not only peddling to the s-f market with regularity, but is also appearing in such magazines as *MR, Manhunt,* and *Trapped*. . . . Randall Garrett's verse, "Tale of Two Pretties," which appeared in the fanzine *Inside,* has been accepted by *Escapade*. Also, his burlesque of early science fiction (in collaboration with Lin Carter), "Masters of the Metropolis," has also been plucked from *Inside* for publication in *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.*

Some fans eventually are thrilled by personally meeting their favorite author in the flesh. However, how many fans have grown up to *be* their favorite author? This strange coincidence concerns Bob Silverberg who admired the works of Ivar Jorgensen back in the early fifties. Jorgenson, as some know, was a pseudonym for Paul W. Fairman. And now that Fairman is editing *Amazing* and the other Ziff-Davis books "Ivar Jorgensen" is apparently becoming a house name. Imagine Silverberg's surprise when his latest story appeared in print under the Jorgensen by-line!

Their names cannot be divulged as yet. But two authors, working together, have sold — under their own names and nu-

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merous pseudonyms — stories this year that are nearly the total 1956 sales of all the other science fiction authors combined. In the first five months of 1956, approximately sixty stories under their various by-lines have been accepted. Both, by the way, are and/or were well known science fiction fans. . . . L. A. Eshbach, whose mint collection of science fiction has been the envy of collectors for years, is now disposing of it. Anyone interested is advised to write to him at PO Box 159, Reading, Pa. He certainly has some beautiful material for sale and some may still be left. . . . The July issue of *Ten Story Sports* features three names well known in science fiction circles: Bob Silverberg, Milton Lesser, and Robert A. Madle.

A FAN PROJECT which deserves all the support it can muster is the book publication of Damon Knight's definitive study of modern science fiction, *"In Search of Wonder."* It will contain more than 80,000 words, and should be available for distribution in August. Price is $4.00. Write to Advent Publishers, 3508 North Sheffield Avenue, Chicago 13, Illinois. This group is headed-up by Earl Kemp, who is noted for the fine bibliographical work he has turned out during the past few years.

Hollywood is seriously considering Edmond Hamilton's old *Weird Tales* shocker, "Pigmy Island"; Wilson Tucker's "Wild Talent," and a 15,000 word original by Ib Melchior, "The Sleeper." . . . Tetsu Yano, who was brought to America by Forrest J. Ackerman for the 1953 World Convention, and who is Japanfan #1, had an s-f comedy produced on radio. He won 20,000 yen for his "Singing Stone on Planet Otankonas." . . . George Pal has called David Duncan's scripting of H. G. Wells' "The Time Machine," "a masterful job." . . . "Ralph 124c41 Plus," Hugo Gernsback's old classic, is being reprinted in Germany with a forward by Forrest J. Ackerman.

THE FANZINES

SIGMA OCTANTIS (a free sample copy can be obtained from editor John Mussells, 4 Curve Street, Wakefield, Massachusetts). This is the fanzine which is sponsoring the amateur writers contest, described above. The present number features a well-worked-out "Genealogy Of Science Fiction & Fantasy Magazine," compiled by Richard Lupoff. There are some fanzine reviews; a piece of humor by Alfred McCoy Andrews; a criticism of fandom by Ronald Voigt; and a very interesting dis-

(Turn to page 123)

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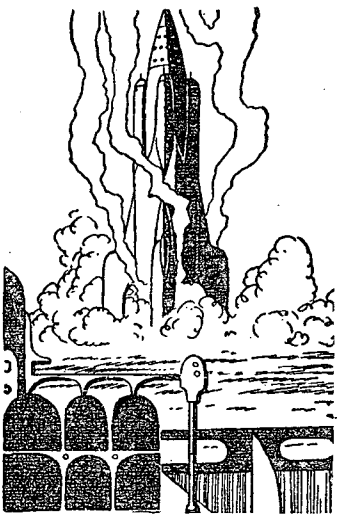
"Normality" is a myth; we're all a little neurotic, and the study of neurosis has been able to classify the general types of disturbance which are most common. And some types (providing the subject is not suffering so extreme a case as to have crossed the border into psychosis) can be not only useful, but perhaps necessary for certain kinds of work....



THE HILLS OF HOME

by Alfred Coppel

THE RIVER *ran still and deep, green and gray in the eddies with the warm smell of late summer rising out of the slow water. Madrone and birch and willow, limp in the evening quiet, and the taste of smouldering leaves . . .*

It wasn't the Russian River. It was the Sacred Iss. The sun had touched the gem-encrusted cliffs by the shores of the Lost Sea of Korus and had vanished, leaving only the stillness of the dusk and the lonely cry of shore birds.

From downstream came the faint sounds of music. It might have been a phonograph playing in one of the summer cabins with names like Polly Ann Roost and Patches and Seventh Heaven, but to Kimmy it was the hated cry of the Father of Therns calling the dreadful Plant Men to their feast of victims borne into

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this Valley Dor by the mysterious Iss.

Kimmy shifted the heavy Martian pistol into his left hand and checked his harness. A soft smile touched his lips. He was well armed; there was nothing he had to fear from the Plant Men. His bare feet turned upstream, away from the sound of the phonograph, toward the shallows in the river that would permit him to cross and continue his search along the base of the Golden Cliffs—

THE SERGEANT'S voice cut through the pre-dawn darkness. "Oh, three hundred, Colonel . . . Briefing in thirty minutes."

Kimball tried to see him in the black gloom. He hadn't been asleep. It would have been hard to waste this last night that way. Instead he had been remembering. "All right, Sergeant," he said. "Coming up."

He swung his feet to the bare boards and sat for a moment, wishing he hadn't had to give up smoking. He could almost imagine the textured taste of the cigaret on his tongue.

Oddly enough, he wasn't tired. He wasn't excited, either. And that was much stranger. He stood up and opened the window to look out into the desert night. Overhead the stars were brilliant and cold. Mars gleamed russet-colored against the sable sky. He smiled, remembering again. So long a road, he thought, from then to now.

Then he stopped smiling and turned away from the window. It hadn't been an easy path and what was coming up now was the hardest part. The goddam psychs were the toughest, always wanting him to bug out on the deal because of their brainwave graphs and word association tests and their Rorschach blots.

"You're a lonely man, Colonel Kimball —"

"Too much imagination could be bad for this job."

How could you sit there with pentothal in your veins and wires running out of your head and tell them about the still waters of Korus, or the pennons flying from the twin towers of Greater Helium or the way the tiny, slanting sun gleamed at dawn through the rigging of a flyer?

Kimball snapped on a light and looked at his watch. 0310. Zero minus one fifty. He opened the steel locker and began to dress.

THE WATER *swirled warm and velvety around his ankles. There, behind that madrone, Kimmy thought. Was that a Plant Man? The thick white trunk and the grasping, blood-sucking arms —*

The radium pistol's weight made his wrist ache, but he clung to it tightly, knowing that he

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could never cope with a Plant Man with a sword alone. The certainty of coming battle made him smile a little, the way John Carter would smile if he were here in the Valley Dor ready to attack the white Therns and their Plant Men.

For a moment, Kimmy felt a thrill of apprehension. The deepening stillness of the river was closing in around him. Even the music from the phonograph was very, very faint. Above him, the great vault of the sky was changing from pink to gray to dusty blue. A bright star was breaking through the curtain of fading light. He knew it was Venus, the Evening Star. But let it be Earth, he thought. And instead of white, let it be the color of an emerald.

He paused in midstream, letting the warm water riffle around his feet. Looking up at the green beacon of his home planet, he thought: I've left all that behind me. It was never really what I wanted. Mars is where I belong. With my friends, Tars Tarkas the great Green Jeddak, and Carter, the Warlord, and all the beautiful brave people.

THE PHONOGRAPH *sang with Vallee's voice: "Cradle me where southern skies can watch me with a million eyes —"*

Kimmy's eyes narrowed and he waded stealthily across the sacred river. That would be Matai Shang, the Father of Holy Therns — spreading his arms to the sunset and standing safely on his high balcony in the Golden Cliffs while the Plant Men gathered to attack the poor pilgrims Iss had brought to this cursed valley.

"Sing me to sleep, lullaby of the leaves" — the phonograph sang. Kimmy stepped cautiously ashore and moved into the cover of a clump of willows. The sky was darkening fast. Other stars were shining through. There wasn't much time left.

KIMBALL STOOD now in the bright glare of the briefing shack, a strange figure in blood-colored plastic. The representatives of the press had been handed the mimeographed releases by the PRO and now they sat in silence, studying the red figure of the man who was to ride the rocket.

They were thinking: Why him? Out of all the scores of applicants — because there are always applicants for a sure-death job — and all the qualified pilots, why this one?

The Public Relations Officer was speaking now, reading from the mimeoed release as though these civilians couldn't be trusted to get the sparse information given them straight without his help, given grudgingly and without expression.

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Kimball listened, only half aware of what was being said. He watched the faces of the men sitting on the rows of folding chairs, saw their eyes like wounds, red from the early morning hour and the murmuring reception of the night before in the Officers' Club. They are wondering how *I* feel, he was thinking. And asking themselves why I want to go.

On the dais nearby, listening to the PRO, but watching Kimball, sat Steinhart, the team analyst. Kimball returned his steady gaze thinking: They start out burning with desire to cure the human mind and end with the shadow of the images. The words become the fact, the therapy the aim. What could Steinhart know of longing? No, he thought, I'm not being fair. Steinhart was only doing his job.

The big clock on the back wall of the briefing shack said three fifty-five. Zero minus one hour and five minutes.

Kimball looked around the room at the pale faces, the open mouths. What have I to do with you now, he thought?

OUTSIDE, THE winter night lay cold and still over the Base. Floodlights spilled brilliance over the dunes and the scrubby earth, high fences casting laced shadows across the burning white expanses of ferroconcrete.

As they filed out of the briefing shack, Steinhart climbed into the command car with Kimball. Chance or design? Kimball wondered. The others, he noticed, were leaving both of them alone.

"We haven't gotten on too well, have we, Colonel?" Steinhart observed in a quiet voice.

Kimball thought: He's pale skinned and very blond. What is it that he reminds me of? Shouldn't there be a diadem on his forehead? He smiled vaguely into the rumbling night. That's what it was. Odd that he should have forgotten. How many rocket pilots, he wondered, were weaned on Burroughs' books? And how many remembered now that the Thern priests all wore yellow wings and a circlet of gold with some fantastic jewel on their forehead?

"We've done as well as could be expected," he said.

Steinhart reached for a cigaret and then stopped, remembering that Kimball had had to give them up because of the flight. Kimball caught the movement and half-smiled.

"I didn't try to kill the assignment for you, Kim," the psych said.

"It doesn't matter now."

"No, I suppose not."

"You just didn't think I was the man for the job."

"Your record is good all the way. You know that," Steinhart

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said. "It's just some of the things —"

Kimball said: "I talked too much."

"You had to."

"You wouldn't think my secret life was so dangerous, would you," the Colonel said smiling.

"You were married, Kim. What happened?"

"More therapy?"

"I'd like to know. This is for me."

KIMBALL SHRUGGED. "It didn't work. She was a fine girl — but she finally told me it was no go. 'You don't live here' was the way she put it."

"She knew you were a career officer; what did she expect —?"

"That isn't what she meant. You know that."

"Yes," the psych said slowly. "I know that."

They rode in silence, across the dark Base, between the concrete sheds and the wooden barracks. Overhead, the stars like dust across the sky. Kimball, swathed in plastic, a fantastic figure not of earth, watched them wheel across the clear, deep night.

"I wish you luck, Kim," Steinhart said. "I mean that."

"Thanks." Vaguely, as though from across a deep and widening gulf.

"What will you do?"

"You know the answers as well as I," the Colonel said impatiently. "Set up the camp and wait for the next rocket. If it comes."

"In two years."

"In two years," the plastic figure said. Didn't he know that it didn't matter?

He glanced at his watch. Zero minus fifty-six minutes.

"Kim," Steinhart said slowly. "There's something you should know about. Something you really should be prepared for."

"Yes?" Disinterest in his voice now, Steinhart noted clinically. Natural under the circumstances? Or neurosis building up already?

"Our tests showed you to be a schizoid — well-compensated, of course. You know there's no such thing as a *normal* human being. We all have tendencies toward one or more types of psychoses. In your case the symptoms are an overly active imagination and in some cases an inability to distinguish reality from — well, fancy."

KIMBALL TURNED to regard the psych cooly. "What's reality, Steinhart? Do *you* know?"

The analyst flushed. "No."

"I didn't think so."

"You lived pretty much in your mind when you were a child," Steinhart went on doggedly. "You were a solitary, a lonely child."

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Kimball was watching the sky again.

Steinhart felt futile and out of his depth. "We know so little about the psychology of space-flight, Kim —"

Silence. The rumble of the tires on the packed sand of the road, the murmur of the command car's engine, spinning oilily, and lit by tiny sunbright flashes deep in the hollows of the hot metal.

"You're glad to be leaving, aren't you —" Steinhart said finally. "Happy to be the first man to try for the planets —"

Kimball nodded absently, wishing the man would be quiet. Mars, a dull rusty point of light low on the horizon, seemed to beckon.

They topped the last hillock and dropped down into the lighted bowl of the launching site. The rocket towered, winged and monstrously checkered in white and orange, against the first flickerings of the false dawn.

KIMMY SAW the girls before they saw him. In their new, low waisted middies and skirts, they looked strange and out of place standing by the pebbled shore of the River Iss.

They were his sisters, Rose and Margaret. Older than he at fifteen and seventeen. But they walked by the river and into danger. Behind him he could hear the rustling sound of the Plant Men as the evening breeze came up.

"Kimm-eeeee —"

They were calling him. In the deepening dusk their voices carried far down the river. "Kimmmmm — eeeeeeeeee —"

He knew he should answer them, but he did not. Behind him he could hear the awful Plant Men approaching. He shivered with delicious horror.

He stood very still, listening to his sisters talking, letting their voices carry down to where he hid from the dangers of the Valley Dor.

"Where is that little brat, anyway?"

"He always wanders off just at dinnertime and then we have to find him —"

"Playing with that old faucet —" Mimicry. "'My rad-ium pis-tol —'"

"Cracked — just cracked. Oh, where IS he, anyway? Kimmmeee, you AN-swer!"

Something died in him. It wasn't a faucet, it WAS a radium pistol. He looked at his sisters with dismay. They weren't really his sisters. They were Therns, with their yellow hair and their pale skins. He and John Carter and Tars Tarkas had fought them many times, piling their bodies for barricades and weaving a flashing pattern of skillful swords in the shifting light of the two moons.

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"Kimmmm — eeee Mom's going to be mad at you! Answer us!"

If only Tars Tarkas would come now. If only the great Green Jeddak would come splashing across the stream on his huge thoat, his two swords clashing —

"He's up there in that clump of willows — hiding!"

"Kimmy! You come down here this instant!"

The Valley Dor was blurring, fading. The Golden Cliffs were turning into sandy, river-worn banks. The faucet felt heavy in his grimy hand. He shivered, not with horror now. With cold.

He walked slowly out of the willows, stumbling a little over the rocks.

HE LAY like an embryo in the viscera of the ship, protected and quite alone. The plastic sac contained him, fed him; and the rocket, silent now, coursed through the airless deep like a questing thought. Time was measured by the ticking of the telemeters and the timers, but Kimball slept insulated and complete.

And he dreamed.

He dreamed of that summer when the river lay still and deep under the hanging willows. He dreamed of his sisters, thin and angular creatures as he remembered them through the eyes of a nine-year-old —

And his mother, tall and shadowy, standing on the porch of the rented cottage and saying exasperatedly: *"Why do you run off by yourself, Kimmy? I worry about you so —"*

And his sisters: *"Playing with his wooden swords and his radium pistol and never wanting to take his nose out of those awful books —"*

He dreamed of the low, beamed ceiling of the cottage, sweltering in the heat of the summer nights and the thick longing in his throat for red hills and a sky that burned deep blue through the long, long days and canals, clear and still. A land that he knew somehow never was, but which lived, for him, through some alchemy of the mind. He dreamed of Mars.

And Steinhart: *"What is reality, Kimmy?"*

THE HOURS stretched into days, the days into months. Time wasn't. Time was a deep night and a starshot void. And dreams.

He awoke seldom. His tasks were simple. The plastic sac and the tender care of the ship were more real than the routine jobs of telemetering information back to the Base across the empty miles, across the rim of the world.

He dreamed of his wife. *"You don't live here, Kim."*

She was right, of course. He

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wasn't of earth. Never had been. My love is in the sky, he thought, filled with an immense satisfaction.

And time slipped by, the weeks into months; the sun dwindled and earth was gone. All around him lay the stunning star-dusted night.

He lay curled in the plastic womb when the ship turned. He awoke sluggishly and dragged himself into awareness.

"I've changed," he thought aloud. "My face is younger, I feel different."

The keening sound of air over the wings brought a thrill. Below him, a great curving disk of reds and browns and yellows. He could see dust storms raging and the heavy, darkened lines of the canals.

There was skill in his hands. He righted the rocket, balanced it. Began the tricky task of landing. It took all of his talent, all of his training. Ponderously, the ship settled into the iron sand; slowly, the internal fires died.

KIMBALL STOOD in the control room, his heart pounding. Slowly, the ports opened. Through the thick quartz he could see the endless plain. Reddish brown, empty. The basin of some long ago sea. The sky was a deep, burning blue with stars shining at midday at the zenith. It looked unreal, a painting of unworldly quiet and desolation.

What is reality, Kimmy?

Steinhart was right, he thought vaguely. A tear streaked his cheek. He had never been so alone.

And then he imagined he saw something moving on the great plain. He scrambled down through the ship, past the empty fuel tanks and the lashed supplies. His hands were clawing desperately at the dogs of the outer valve. Suddenly the pressure jerked the hatch from his hands and he gasped at the icy air, his lungs laboring to breathe.

He dropped to one knee and sucked at the thin, frigid air. His vision was cloudy and his head felt light. But there *was* something moving on the plain.

A shadowy cavalcade.

STRANGE MONSTROUS men on fantasic war-mounts, long spears and fluttering pennons. Huge golden chariots with scythes flashing on the circling hubs and armored giants, the figments of a long remembered dream —

He dropped to the sand and dug his hands into the dry powdery soil. He could scarcely see now, for blackness was flickering at the edges of his vision and his failing heart and lungs were near collapse.

Kimmm-eee!

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A huge green warrior on a gray monster of a thoat was beckoning to him. Pointing toward the low hills on the oddly near horizon.

Kimmmm-eeeee!

The voice was thin and distant on the icy wind. Kimball knew that voice. He knew it from long ago in the Valley Dor, from the shores of the Lost Sea of Korus where the tideless waters lay black and deep —

He began stumbling across the empty, lifeless plain. He knew the voice, he knew the man, and he knew the hills that he must reach, quickly now, or die.

They were the hills of home.

Inside Science Fiction

(Continued from page 114)

cussion column by Frank A. Kerr. *Sigma* is a commendable little fanzine: send for your free copy, and you might submit that story you have written.

Sata (10¢ from Dan Adkins, PO Box 258, Luke Air Force Base, Glendale, Arizona). This is a brand-new entry to the ever-changing fanzine field. The most striking thing about *Sata* is the excellent reproduction (the Ditto process is used) and the excellent artwork. Adkins, unlike the majority of his contemporaries, learned how to handle his medium of reproduction adequately before publishing his first issue. The material, while satisfactory, is not outstanding; however, the fine appearance of the magazine compels us to recommend it.

Scintillation (10¢ from Mark Schulzinger, 6791 Meadow Ridge Lane, Cincinnati 37, Ohio). This is a mimeographed magazine, and a rather interesting one. "The Fiend Speaks" is the title of Ray Schaffer's column.

Hal Shapiro has an interesting column, as does Alan Dodd. Then there are the usual letters and fanzine reviews. *Scintillation* is not one of the very best of the fanzines, but it is a satisfactory one and deserves to be sampled.

Send all fanzines for review to Robert A. Madle, 1620 Anderson Street, Charlotte, N. C.

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Editorial

FIRST PRINCIPLES

THE FIRST TWO science fiction editors, Hugo Gernsback and T. O'Conor Sloane, A.B., A.M., L.L.D., and Ph.D., were scientists; Gernsback was, and is, an expert in electronics, an inventor, and is well versed in many scientific fields; and Dr. Sloane was author of what was then the standard textbook of Chemistry. Both were enthusiastic about the potentialities of this new medium of popular fiction; and although Dr. Sloane seemed to have a greater interest and broader background in literature than Gernsback, he was no less convinced than his predecessor that this new kind of fiction should be rooted in accurate science, and that the stories should include reliable instruction as well as the romance of discovery and exploration.

When *Amazing Stories* first appeared, in 1926, the contents of the early numbers were mostly reprint. H. G. Wells's novels and short stories were featured in every issue for over two years; several of Jules Verne's novels were run, and quite a number of stories that Gernsback had previously published in his technical magazines saw another printing. A few items were culled from the Munsey magazines, and from other publications which occasionally used what they called "different" stories.

It was not that Gernsback didn't want to use new stories, or that there were no popular fiction authors around who ever wrote this kind of story. On the

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contrary, he most ardently desired to build up a category of science fiction authors via his new magazine; and bibliographies show that there were a number of writers who liked to turn out a "different" story. The difficulty was that hardly any of them had scientific backgrounds; they could write well enough, but they just didn't know their subject matter when it came to scientifiction.

GERNSBACK relates some of his difficulties in the editorial for *Science Fiction Plus*, March, 1953: ". . . Most people, including newspaper and magazine editors, considered Science Fiction as a crackpot endeavor. . . . Indeed, most authors had the same conviction. I well remember when, in 1911, I first started to print Science Fiction *regularly* in some of my magazines. Most authors approached on the subject agreed to do a few stories, *provided I did not use their real names!*"

What was hoped for was a supply of manuscripts from practicing scientists, fictionizing possibilities in their respective fields, and picturing what the world might be like if they were realized. It sounded like a reasonable expectation; a scientist author would use his imagination, true, but under strict control, and there would be a solid foundation of accurate facts and principles beneath his extrapolations.

Some such manuscripts did, in fact, ensue. The early stories of Cyril G. Wates and Cecil B. White, for example, read like the work of men who were "working scientists"; the early stories of Murray Leinster, Fletcher Pratt, and Bob Olsen bespeak background training and study. And these men could write well-developed stories, too.

However, there were other—and too many—stories by authors who knew science but not story-writing; such persons' idea of a plot, for example, was to have some Professor make some marvellous discovery, or invent some wonderful machine; explain and demonstrate it to the friend or pupil who is telling the story; and then have the machine blow up, or a catastrophe wipe the works away before anything could happen. Whether these authors were afraid of the ideas, and really believed the implications in such stories that Man Should Not Try To Go Too Far Into The Mysteries of Whatever; or whether they just couldn't imagine where the invention would lead, and so took the easy way out; or whether they weren't interested in anything more than an essay in narrative form is a moot point. Probably any of these explanations will apply to a particular instance; in any event, too many of the stories that had

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scientific interest had nothing else.

A MORE SERIOUS flaw in early magazine science fiction was the tendency of Gernsback and Sloane to tolerate absurd nonsense, if it was accompanied by sound scientific facts and given an air of plausibility. It is still amazing to me that the man who wrote: "Let me clarify the term Science-Fiction. When I speak of it I mean the truly, scientific, prophetic *Science*-Fiction with the full accent on Science. I emphatically do not mean the fairy tale brand, the weird or fantastic type of what mistakenly masquerades under the name of Science Fiction today."—and who wrote this as a sincere statement of principles he has always held in regard to science fiction—was capable of publishing stories about giant insects (such as Keller's "The Human Termites"), about people living on an atom (such as Chappelow's "In Two Worlds"), about totally impossible methods of invisibility (such as Wells's "The Invisible Man")[1] even while he extolled the educational value of the stories he published, and reiterated the necessity for accurate science in science fiction. It is amazing, because there was no hypocrisy here; obviously, Gernsback either didn't know such things were impossible, or didn't realize that he was publishing fairy tales, camouflaged with scientific facts. Dr. Sloane, when confronted with a flagrant impossibility in a story he published, would admit that such was indeed the case, but contend that we had to allow a bit of "poetic license" if we were going to have any science fiction at all.

THE NEXT development was predictable. Pulp fiction writers and readers, who found science fiction to their taste, and science fiction fans whose backgrounds consisted of High School science plus a file of the early *Amazing Stories,* etc., began to write for the magazines. A number of them turned out to be competent writers, or better; not being trained scientists, they chose themes which had already appeared and started variations upon them. Then the publisher of a chain of pulp magazines saw that science fiction seemed to be here to stay, and *Astounding Stories of Super Science* was born. And in its pages, we encountered the giant insects,[2] the

[1]For a detailed discussion of the manifold impossibilities in some of the best known invisibility stories, see Dr. Richard Macklin's article, "I Just Can't See It," *Science Fiction Quarterly,* August, 1956.

[2]The cover for the first issue, January, 1930, shows the hero delivering what he hopes is a knockout punch to a beetle approximately six feet high when standing on its two rear legs.

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people living in atoms or electrons, invisibility, invaders from Mars and elsewhere, only without the scientific facts surrounding their original appearances, and often without even much attempt to make them seem plausible. After all, the highbrow science fiction magazines ran stories about giant bugs, so . . .

THIS WAS the beginning of the shift away from science in science fiction, and the entire issue of stories being instructive, as a matter of policy. Gernsback and Sloane, despite their blind spots, still sought for stories which conformed to first principles—or at least honestly believed that they did. Let's give them the benefit of any doubt; the fact was that such stories came in less frequently. Dr. Sloane was an old man when he became editor of *Amazing Stories,* in 1929. That his mind was keen as ever is shown by the fine scientific editorials he wrote, right up to the last issue of *Amazing Stories* to appear under his hand. The marks of age showed in his lack of tendency to seek out *science* fiction.

Gernsback, however, remained aggressive; he found examples of the kind of story he wanted in some of the translations from the German he published. And he still managed to obtain a bit of *science* fiction along with the future adventure stories. The issue of *Wonder Stories,* prior to one where millipedes the sizes of army tanks roamed the countryside,[3] contained an insect story which was neither an affront to the reader's intelligence, nor an exploitation of his ignorance—"The Invulnerable Scourge," by John Scott Campbell. And while one "learned" from *Astounding Stories* that a person would instantaneously freeze solid and/or immediately suffocate if exposed to the "cold" and vacuum of space,[4] Nathan Schachner and Arthur L. Zagat, whatever sins they may have committed otherwise, took the trouble to inquire into what was actually known for a background to their descriptions of what might happen to a man who left a spaceship without protection, in their serial, "Exiles of the Moon." (*Wonder Stories,* September, October, November, 1931—the incident in question occurs in part two.)[5]

[3] "The Silent Scourge," by Morrison F. Colloday. *Wonder Stories,* December, 1930. The John Scott Campbell story appeared in the November issue.

[4] See Edmond Hamilton's "The Sargasso of Space," for example, in *Astounding Stories,* September, 1931.

[5] Stanley G. Weinbaum received much undeserved praise when he made much the same points in "The Red Peri," *Astounding Stories,* November, 1935. The points were good, and worth making, but Weinbaum shouldn't be credited as the first one to make them.

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HOWEVER, Gernsback was fighting a losing battle; and the next development—cosmic pseudo-science, not originated, but certainly invited and encouraged when *Astounding Stories* changed publishers—was still farther away from science fiction's first principles. While Orlin Tremaine (who discovered and encouraged a number of fine writers, and was certainly not opposed to sound science in science fiction) produced a highly successful and enjoyable magazine, the "thought-variant" era and influence was more destructive to science fiction than whatever literary improvement may have accompanied it could offset. Very likely, Hugo Gernsback had such stories in mind when he first started to complain about the replacement of science fiction by fairy tales. (Not that there's anything wrong with a good fairy tale, or pseudo-science, or super-science yarn, so long as it is recognized and labelled for what it is. I loved the Tremaine *Astounding*, and can still enjoy a sizeable percentage of the stories which appeared there; but I have learned since that most of them were not science fiction.)

What is labelled science fiction today is largely the Clayton or Tremaine *Astounding* type of story; the Gernsback type has nearly disappeared.

However, the fundamental spirit of Gernsback's principles is not dead; it lives in John W. Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*, and in a few others (including, I hope *Future Science Fiction*, and its siblings), although the outward form does not bear any great resemblance. I think that all of these titles could carry the slogan that appeared on the contents page of the original *Amazing Stories:* "Prophetic Fiction is the Mother of Scientific Fact," without incurring charges of false and misleading advertising.

However, it should not be forgotten that those of us who are promulgating *science* fiction today have advantages which the original editors did not. We are working in an established field, which has a long-standing audience, however small in comparison with the following of western and detective fiction. And while science fiction is not as highly regarded today as some fans think it ought to be, it certainly stands in higher repute than it did in the 20's. There is a pool of talent—men and women, with scientific and technical backgrounds, who have read science fiction and liked it, and who also have writing ability—which was not available to Hugo Gernsback and Dr. Sloane.

Qualifications are necessary, before anyone supposes that we imagine that every story we run is prophetic, or that everything in this magazine is strictly sci-

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entific. Of course such is not the case; it couldn't be. One issue of a single science fiction magazine per year might be possible under such restrictions, but hardly more than that.

DR. SLOANE was entirely right when he stated, in answer to complaints, that a certain amount of "poetic license" had to be allowed in order to have enough science fiction to keep the magazine appearing. Some readers, no doubt, retorted, "Very well—but not *that* much!" However, it isn't the *amount* of poetic license which made the late Bernard De Voto write that the science in science fiction ". . . is idiotic beyond any possibility of exaggeration. . . ." It was the *kind* of license.

There may have been some shreds of excuse for allowing the old prospector, Drifting Sands, to survive not only approaching, but dipping his fingers into, Ed Earl Repp's pool of radium salts. (*Science Wonder Stories,* August and September, 1929; the incident appears in the first installment.) The story was probably written in 1928, and may have been in type before the incident of the radium poisoning among girls at the watch-dial works showed that even minute doses of radium could be fatal. However, there was no excuse for allowing the immersion to melt Sands' fingers off cleanly and make him forty years younger in the same instant. The Gernsback-Sloane idea of poetic license was to allow truly flabbergasting absurdities and impossibilities, provided that they were surrounded by correct statements of known scientific fact.[6] Whether these editors imagined that the true facts in such a story would exorcize the fantasy, or whether they really believed that their readers could tell which was which, remains a moot point.

BE THAT as it may, we have seen that poetic license quickly evolved into sheer license, although sometimes with a touch of poetry. It wasn't a far step from faulty science to totally false science; and from illogical development of possibly acceptable premises (at the time, at least) to near-total disregard of logic in story construction.

The return to *science* fiction, in addition to paying more attention to the requirements of good fiction, has involved a different kind of poetic license. This can be stated quite simply: never (knowingly) permit provable impossibilities; allow plausible

[6]My personal all-time favorite example is "The Marble Virgin," by Kennie McDowd, *Science Wonder Stories,* June, 1929; reprinted in *Startling Stories,* July, 1942. Almost as wonderful as the story is the author's and editor's defense of it in "The Reader Speaks," *Science Wonder Stories,* August, 1929.

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theories and extrapolations when they are consistently worked out. The stories need not be "instructive"—but they *must not misinstruct*. For example, a means of increasing the size of an ant to that of a dog might be set forth —some means which does not contradict or ignore the facts of known chemical, biological, etc., processes. Letting such a creature live longer than the time it would take for an ant that size to suffocate is inacceptable—unless the author can show exactly how his genius managed to evade the square-cube law, and be damned convincing about it.

TIME TRAVEL and psionic machines, etc., aren't proven impossibilities; science simply lacks sufficient data to consider them. If time-travel, or a psionic machine, then, is the *sole* "gimmick" of a story, then the story isn't science fiction, though it may be quite good 20th Century fantasy or weird fiction. Either, however, are acceptable as author's devices. Garrett's "Suite Mentale," in this issue, deals with the nature of the mind, and the functioning of the brain. Both of these subjects are in the province of science, and to the best knowledge we have, there are no impossibilities here. Telepathy is treated herein as a by-product.

So long as magazines have to come out on schedule, the likelihood of any science fiction editor or author making a slip, now and then, will continue to exist. The writing of science fiction includes the risk of acquiring and transmitting accidental misinformation. But with the present-day attitude of the better editors and authors toward the subject, blunders amidst the wonders will be far more rare than they were thirty years ago, when it was okay to let your characters shrink until they landed on an atom, so long as the "explanations" included accurate data on atomic weights, valences, and the number of electrons in an element or isotope.

R. W. L.

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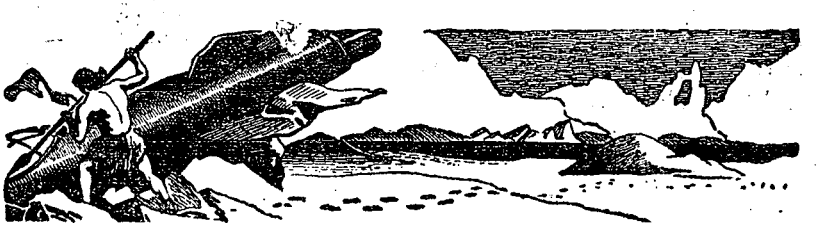

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